THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

BY A. D. SERTILLANGES

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INTRODUCTION

To Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus.—EPH. iii. 21.

THE reader of this work is placed at a point of view at once doctrinal and apologetic; but to convince him the writer counts much less on apologetic than on straightforward statements saying *This is so,* and very frequently leaving it to *the soul, that is by nature Christian,* to infer for itself: *This must be so.*

It is our firm conviction that the Church, when looked upon with the "simple eye" of the Gospel, is its own defence. It is only needful that the authenticity of what is seen should correspond to the simplicity of the eye that sees it: and it is because our experience has shown that in this matter a crowd of prejudices are current, a great number of truths are weakened, and many others are presented under their least favourable aspect by ill-informed or impassioned minds, that we have not thought it overbold to undertake once more a task which has been so often done better.

There is a diversity of spirits, and the Spirit blows where it wills. Those who have never approached learned researches or eloquent pleadings *pro domo Dei* will perhaps find scattered up and down these pages some little truth to acknowledge, some little religious substance whereon to feed.

That this may be so is the prayer of one who wishes nothing for himself, and does not intend to put forth anything on his own authority: but submits all to the intentions and judgements of his Church, which as a son he accepts and loves.

BOOK I

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS FEELING IN GENERAL

BEFORE one makes a study of an organism, estimates its value, or even understands it, it is indispensable to know what purpose it serves.

Men of science tell us that *the need creates the organ,* and they mean this of things made in fact: but the axiom has its place in the moral order also. Apart from some end to be realised, an organ is a useless thing, and one organ is wanted rather than another for some special end.

In the sphere of religion, we who are Catholics, it is true, say: It is the Spirit of God that acts: but how would we have Him act, except to meet essential needs?

Even the idea of the supernatural has nothing to do with all this; for in the sight of God the supernatural is nature also. When God actually establishes us in a state by means of an immediate act of creative will, that state is, in fact, our nature.

What this nature demands, what it needs in order that it may function and attain its purpose: this we must unceasingly ask ourselves when we wish to justify the Church in any way.

But without speaking as yet either of the supernatural or of the Catholic Church, it is certain that the idea of any special organisation called a religious society rests in general on the fact that there is in us a special need corresponding to such an organ of religion. The nature of this need is the first question to clear up.

* * * * *

Religion, taken in its most universal acceptation, may be defined as the bond which attaches the human creature to the mysterious reality whereon he feels himself to depend, himself and his immediate environment: and on which in consequence depends his destiny.

Whoever looks around and within himself: whoever is living, however destitute he be, realises, at least by a vague intuition, that there are two orders of facts which condition the whole of man's existence.

There is the interior fact: the effort of life which goes out from us, the desire for knowledge, for power, for expan-

sion of the affections, for happiness, which is ourselves. For man is just this: a walking desire for happiness: an effort to know, to feel, and to have power.

And then there is the environment wherein this effort of life makes itself manifest. An environment in two principal compartments: one, which is enclosed within the limits of our very being, and which may, to borrow a phrase from the physiologists, be called the interior environment—that is to say, all that assemblage of internal conditions with which we have to count in order to think, to feel, to will, to be happy and strong; the other, that which is outside, the exterior environment, social or natural, whose limits are untraceable, and which weighs like a fate, benevolent or inimical, over all that we do, think, will, or undertake for the sake of living.

Then, if one reflects, if one takes stock of oneself, one sees that religious feeling springs up in the heart of man from the clash of these two realities; the interior reality represented by the will-to-live, and the surrounding reality which is its field of action.

With our minds we want to know. The very savage seeks to comprehend what he sees, and endeavours to explain to himself the cause behind the effects.

So, under all this nameless functioning, under this entanglement of phenomena which the world causes us to see, we feel that a mysterious power lies hidden.

Whether it be to explain existence, or to supply the force which it consumes, or to trace the paths which it follows in its vertiginous evolution, a source of being and movement, a thought, seems to us indispensable, and we think of God, or of gods, as the explanation of the phenomena.

Moreover, as we have to live and not only to philosophise, we come to say to ourselves that the power which explains everything is also the power which it would be well to have favourable to us if we wish, in this complex and difficult life, to find what we seek, to realise what we regard as the motive of life.

Life does not belong to us; it is the result of a thousand conditions, most of which escape us. When we set out to the war of life, we have the feeling that everything is going to yield, that everything is going to respond to this appeal from within, which would readily become imperious and make boundless demands. But no, the created world resists; the pitiless wave of events casts back the swimmer; and though we may have been what is called happy, yet always, on some point, resistances gather in us and around us, oppositions reveal themselves, sometimes merely restrictive, sometimes offensive and painful, sometimes deserved,

but more often unjust; and at the last comes death, which destroys everything, reduces all to nothing, and opposes its silent irony to our thirst for life.

Life does not bring us what we demand; it brings us what we resist with all our might, and at the end it takes from us, not only our aims, but our very selves; it is a threefold contradiction to that sovereign liberty of willing, to that expansion, which seems to us to be the law of our being.

Now, here is a new source of religious feeling. For suffering, and above all unjust suffering, causes to spring up instinctively in all of us, first a question, then a call for help. Death disappoints our desire of unfailing life, and makes our heart leap up to welcome anything that may save its flame from extinction. And, moreover, when we are alive and exert ourselves, and our effort is too brief to attain its goal, this limiting of the action that we desire to see dominant arouses in us, firstly astonishment, and then another call for help. And this time the call is not for a lessening of our wretchedness, but—what comes to the same thing—for an increase of strength drawn from the sources of that sovereign activity which seems to us to set everything in motion with so much liberty and power.

Life, then, *does not belong to us;* but neither does life *satisfy* us. Always, everywhere, we see minds, imaginations, hearts, finding points of contact with this dream.

At hours which are slightly overcast, but which for that very reason are more clear-sighted than of wont, when everyday objects cease to obstruct and to fascinate our sight, every soul feels itself more or less straitened in reality, vaguely anguished by its native distress, anxious for an unknown which escapes from its grasp and yet calls out to it.

To the unknown God: this was the dedication of an altar at Athens. This altar is spread always in all of us. Even the most positive people feel somewhat stifled until a breath of the Infinite has come to suffuse the atmosphere wherein they live. In the eternal and invisible alone does our higher life find its fulfilment, something that may satisfy that excess of interior activity which nothing material can use up.

Without some transcendent reality which we can grasp, with which we can have intercourse, which gives to our daily actions a superior sanction and some vague glimmers of the Infinite, the poverty of the world is too plain.

Man wills to grow, even though it be at the cost of illusion. All superstitions prove it. All our methods of lending unreal colours to the real, of joining to what is experi-

enced the charm of the dream—are not these the flagrant proof of our vital insufficiency? Exclusively on solid earth we cannot live, and we need to believe the saying of Cicero: *A divine power surrounds the life of man.*

Lastly, there is in us not only a call to truth and happiness, a call to life, a call to sufficiency, but also a call to goodness.

We feel quite sure that our life cannot be conducted at random. Here is something decided on, and it seems to us to be good; that alternative appears an evil, and the order of good and evil is imposed upon us as something fixed in the eternal, the most solid bond, perhaps, that attaches us to a transcendent reality.

Then, as we believe in the good, we wish to perform it: we approve it, not only in itself, but in ourselves. And what prevents us from attaining to it? This contradiction which we feel between certain tendencies which favour it and certain others which thwart it. *I urge myself to will that which I will not,* said St. Augustine. *I wish for the good and approve it, and yet I do evil,* said Ovid. *Wretched man that I am!* cried St. Paul; *the good which I will I do not, and the evil which I hate, that I do.*

Every human soul, from the highest who thus despair of themselves to the most undiscerning and the vilest—every human soul feels that it is the slave of an interior fatality which does not allow it to make its life conformable to what it wills.

Against this interior slavery our nature must needs rebel, seek to break the meshes of the net, to escape towards greater liberty and mastery of itself.

Now this effort, which it finds not indeed altogether powerless and useless, but imperfect and insufficient, invites it to seek the assistance of a force foreign to itself. And yet it is not foreign: it must needs be inward, since its task is to set in motion our very selves: it must not be violent, since its task is to come to the aid of our liberties, not to take their place.

Then our soul, sounding its utmost depth, comes into contact there, in its moral effort, with this supreme Reality which is indeed the deepest depth of all, and even of our very selves: which supports all, even that which thinks itself independent, and can bring all into action, even that which is free.

The life of religion thus becomes recourse to God inwardly and morally, as just now we saw it to mean recourse to God as the power underlying nature and society, working happiness and justice, discovering the ideal.

And what it asks of God under this relation is, first of all, to help it to the good by means of an interior urge: but, in

addition, to make the moral world, whereto we belong, attain to an expansion more rich than the actual arrangement of human life admits.

The moral *heaven,* that is to say the harmony established between rational creatures and this eternal order which we feel hovering above us; such is, once more, the postulate of all conscious life.

In every way we find that our life cannot be enclosed within itself; that its immediate sources, whether within or without, demand a more profound source, an ultimate source, which humanity calls God, and our relations with which—belief, prayer, ritual actions individual or collective—are called religion.

It suffices, with these brief remarks, to show that religion, the appanage of the churches, is not an arbitrary thing, a thing purely exterior, hanging heavy constraints upon us as excrescences, or, let us say, *superstitions:* it is a vital necessity. It is called forth by an effort, to adapt, and if one may say so, to complete life.

Nothing is complete for us, if the object of religion, and religion itself, be omitted.

Knowledge is not complete, since, if it stops at the edge of the mysterious and refuses to envelop it by faith, it excludes the utmost depth of the truth which is the object of its researches.

Exterior life is not complete, since we forget the power which supports it, which is most active for happiness, most helpful in trouble, the only thing in which the ideal is realised, the One, or in any case, the Prime necessity.

And the interior life, lastly, is not complete, when we neglect the fundamental resource, that which is in a certain way our very selves—since the divine source whence our life gushes up can only be within it, and, as it were, in line with it—and which yet infinitely surpasses ourselves, being capable of supplying the complement of activity which we lack.

We are founded in God, and lack the best of ourselves if He is not there. Our life, devoid of relations with Him, that is to say, devoid of religion, is a life essentially incomplete, a life not only crownless; the case is much more serious than that! A coping-stone, cornice, or roof-ornament, a building can dispense with; but its foundation it can by no means do without. Thus, life is mere nothingness, if it be deprived of divine support, and of all relation with the Divine. It rests on air: it remains in insufficiency, and finally in emptiness: for what is not enough . . . is not enough, and what is not entirely itself is nothing.

This is the first thing to be said to a man who asks what

religion is, and what purpose is served by the institutions which exist on account of it.

We must go further : for it is not self-evident that religious feeling must create institutions, churches. But before setting out on this central question, we must pass through other stages, and first of all ask what there is in an objection which some people think formidable, for it is a stumbling-block to many minds, though at bottom so slight.

This object which we propose as a supplement to life, who knows if we cannot conquer it for ourselves, without religion being mixed up in the matter, without churches claiming to have been founded to preserve its exclusiveness? Who knows if religion, which we say comes to supply what we lack, be not simply on this head the rough outline of progress, destined to be replaced, like every rough outline, by the finished picture of temporal life?

Knowledge, we say, is going to vanish in the mysterious. But the mysterious shrinks back day by day, and knowledge may become entire.

Exterior life shows itself to be incomplete, sad, famished for the ideal : but the labour of the ages is employed precisely in bringing these insufficiencies to an end. More than one scourge has been already overcome, more than one force conquered, and as for the ideal, is it not being placed on the plane of the real itself by our new points of view in all departments?

Lastly, the interior life seems to resist progress most. Humanity progresses without stay, said Goethe; man is always the same. But how do we know that this is not one of those approximations wherewith polemic is satisfied, through its inability to apprehend great spaces? The mountains too are always the same, and the shape of the oceans, and the regular course of rivers. And yet the earth is incessantly being transformed. Once the sea washed Paris ; Paris is dry to-day. So also man can conquer the animal in himself and win that interior liberty which he lacks.

We must look at this objection, not so much by reason of its value, which is little, as by reason of the useful opportunities which it affords for more precise explanation.

We must see then what points progress, whose influence we are by no means disposed to deny, can affect ; what points on the other hand its action cannot touch, or may even—for we must go so far—injure by aggravation or compulsion in relation to the aim of religion and the means thereto.

CHAPTER II

THE NECESSITY AND PERMANENCE OF RELIGIOUS FEELING

THOSE who say of religion that it is a passing phenomenon, a stage; that some day man will have passed beyond it, if he has not done so already, in order to arrive at a "scientific" conception and a sufficient organisation of life, have not closely considered what constitutes the foundation either of religion or even of life.

Their illusion can be understood up to a certain point, and we are going to speak of its sources: but that is no reason for being duped by it. It is connected on the one hand with over-systematic views of the religious history of mankind: on the other, and in consequence, with a youthful trust in science which was a disease of the nineteenth century.

In this epoch of infatuation and hallucinatory pride, it was believed that man actually held the key of everything, the key of history and of observable reality. The stages of humanity were well known. The *law of the three stages* marked their precise succession, and assumed the invincible might of this universally self-advertised lever, progress.

There had been firstly the religious phase: then came the metaphysical phase: and lastly there must be the scientific or positive phase. And the positive stage would replace with advantage the religious as well as the metaphysical; man would be satisfied with it, and would have done with dogmas, with mysteries, rites and churches.

There is only one unfortunate thing about this, which is that this seductive theory is arbitrary and superficial: that it attributes to the three dispositions, whose rank it pretends to fix, an order of succession in place of an order of concomitant influence and aims, and that it is thus brought, in a manner which may justifiably be called childish, to impute transience to two of the terms of this eternal trilogy.

Certainly, what is called the *positive* mind has been able to shine more or less at certain epochs: but that it has ever been wanting in man can hardly be seriously suggested. And as the positive mind has not been lacking in the past, so neither will the metaphysical mind, the religious mind, be lacking in the future. It is a question of measure. Setting aside the idea of measure, these are things which complete one another and are far from excluding each other, and when we sacrifice one of them to another, we show ourselves hypnotised by one aspect of reality, and careless of reality in its entirety, which passes sentence on us.

The metaphysical mind has for its object first causes: it must indeed be the case that these exist, and that they are studied. Those who refuse to do this, pretending that they are unknowable, make an act of humility far too deep for it to be really sincere, and, a fortiori, justifiable.

If first causes were quite inaccessible to us, we could no more deny them than we can affirm them, but in fact everyone affirms them or denies them; no one holds really and finally to the "positive" attitude.

After all, that is the best way. Brutal negation is better than this humility full of pride, which employs itself in forging chains for our intelligence.

It is not true that man's forehead is so low, and that we are so entirely imprisoned in the cage of phenomena. Through the bars we can at the very least look furtively and catch a few gleams. Now so, and with greater reason, religion could not let itself be dismissed to the realm of chimeras.

Without speaking of a revelation, and of a divine help to guarantee the existence and assure the eternity of religion, it must always be true, considering only the necessity of things, that religious feeling cannot disappear.

The need to which it corresponds has in truth nothing decadent or transitory about it: it is founded on the relation of three eternal things: fundamental human nature, the universe in its radical insufficiency, and their common, alone satisfying source, which is the Divinity.

What would be necessary to suppress religion? This has already been said, to all intents and purposes, in showing its sources. It would be necessary to suppress the mysterious, to suppress suffering, death, the insufficiency of life, the competition of good and evil within us; or on the other hand to resign oneself, and to sign an abdication which must in many contingencies take the form of despair.

Now, this alternative appears to-day, as it did yesterday, and cannot but do to-morrow, repugnant to our nature. In all this resistance of facts to our deepest wills, we must always see an eternal originating cause of religious impulses and of religious effects; consequently an anticipated justification, and as it were a favourable prejudice on behalf of a revelation, and an institution which exploits it.

In what then does possible progress consist? To make this clear will give satisfaction to the objector while breaking the force of his objection.

It can be expressed in a word. In developing our resources, we change on the surface our relations with nature and with ourselves. Thereby we also change the form of our relations with the divine Reality which must come as a supplement

to nature and to ourselves. But the fundamental relation remains identical, and consequently religion keeps its assured foundations.

To understand this, it only remains to survey once more the various domains in which religious thought finds its source.

First of all, knowledge. What is it which, in its progress, scientific knowledge must cause to disappear? All the supernatural, say the positivists. Let us say rather: the capricious providence of the Sun-god, of the Cloud-god, of Jupiter who hurls the thunderbolt, of the dragon who causes eclipses, and of all that resembles these religious baubles.

But the fundamental supernatural, the feeling that there is a source of phenomena, a source which is conscious, intelligent, almighty and ineffable; what progress of science or of philosophy can impair it, and forbid us to seek legitimately to live thereby rather than by science itself, which knows nothing of it?

The more we know of the world, the more intimately we enter into its mysteries and powers, the more we understand how fundamentally inaccessible it is to us; how our thought, poor will-o'-the-wisp, does nothing but wander on the surface of things, knowing "the whole of nothing," fated to stumble, as soon as investigation pushes its point a little further, against the wall of the inaccessible and the unknowable.

The multiplication of discoveries has done nothing but throw us into dismay before depths which the savage never suspected. Our universe is immeasurably enlarged: the apparent inertia of what we call matter is revealed as rich with an activity which inspires amazement. The forces of life become evident with a richness and a plasticity which are disconcerting.

What do we know of all this? So little! Creation grows hollow to the extent that our regard pierces it, and the geniuses of this age have well felt that nothing will ever be able to bear us, us and our vacillating thought, over this ocean of mystery for which, as Littré says, we have neither barque nor sail.

How should we not be readier than ever to-day to accept any help extended to us across the spaces, or from the depths of consciousness, any light arising to illumine what the reason with its reasoning cannot reach?

With regard to our exterior action and the powerlessness our will experiences when we desire to conquer the hostility of our environment, to reduce suffering and avert death so as to instal in their place the tranquillity, sufficiency and permanence we dream of, what can progress do as yet?

Progress enables us in a measure to protect ourselves, to heal ourselves, to enlarge our life on our own account, and therefore those appeals to super-nature, which of old were responsible for sorcerers, oracles, healers by exorcism and incantation-makers, tend to disappear.

Moreover, progress works towards the refining of the religious feeling by combating materialism and the impropriety of certain ill-judged forms of devotion. But to refine is to strengthen, not to suppress. There should be only one way of suppressing, and that is to replace: and certainly the attempts to replace the supernatural by science do not go very far.

It is all very well, in speeches at Renan's statue, to chant in pompous style of the conquests of science over human superstition. If by superstition the orators mean what we have just mentioned and condemned, we may easily agree with them; but when we are compelled to understand thereby the having recourse to God and religion in its deepest essence, we may be permitted to find this attitude more foolish than the superstitions they denounce.

These, whether pagan or pseudo-Christian, are wrong in one respect alone: they neglect too much immediate causes and personal effort, by the means of which we can to some slight extent master and bend to our own ends certain realities of life. But those who wish to make us believe that henceforth life can be satisfied without having any recourse to the transcendent, and who thus practically suppress the First Cause, fall into a much deeper error.

Apart from oratorical parades and table-talk, it is obvious that by the most advanced science as by the blackest ignorance the limit of man's power is reached incomparably more quickly than that of his desire: that the source of our wretchedness is not one which can run dry, and that suffering and death are invincible.

Those who do not understand this—those high livers who believe in the preparation by science of universal panaceas and elixirs of life—we must pity with all our heart.

The fact that the sea has been crossed in an aeroplane is enough to make some people believe that the great problems of humanity are on the point of being solved; as if former inventions had done anything more than complicate life, and render it more devouring and more anxious as well as more eager. Fundamentally it remains the same, and it is not by discovery that we can modify its principles, or consequently avert what wounds us.

Every creature groans, says St. Paul, *in the expectation of its redemption:* that is a saying with a much deeper meaning in it than the astounding phrases of the scientists.

Any child can see that science and all human progress offer

only palliatives against the things that bruise us, torture us, terrify us, and urge on the maddened soul towards the religion that redeems it.

We are cast on to the bosom of a terrifying universe, and we shall feel it so all the more keenly as its prodigious machinery becomes more apparent.

This universe of ours supports us and nourishes us; but at the least movement of its mass it overturns us, throws us to the ground and speedily overwhelms us.

But we wish to live, and we wish to enjoy: we wish to dominate our life: we would like to dominate the world, and we feel, as we stand on our quivering atom, that we have a divine soul, made for fulness and immortality.

This it is which creates religion, and this it is also which makes it immortal. The more men progress, the more evident will be the disproportion between what we wish to do and what we can do, what we fight against with all our strength and what we are able to avoid. The more the masked phantoms of sorrow and death, and the maddening laugh of our incurable mediocrity seem to us equally insufferable and invincible, the more, in spite of its passing crises, will religion have reason to console, to sustain, to promise, which, from our present point of view, is the whole of its function.

Lastly, if we consider the moral life, if we recall that interior contradiction which creates in us an obstacle to what we love and would wish to see conquer, we feel that progress, there more than elsewhere, is powerless to dethrone religion, because it is powerless to do its work.

Not that there is no moral progress. We can certainly bridle our animal passions, make greater resistance to our brutal instincts, conquer a little more interior liberty, domination over ourselves, effective prudence. But even there the limit is very close at hand.

The *law of the members* cannot perish, and to bridle the animal in us a little cannot prevent man from being always and everywhere animal.

But it is the animal man which is the obstacle.

Our natural environment being given up to the conflict of forces, our interior environment must also be a battlefield: a battlefield of concurrent influences, of which some favour our good desires, while others create in us centres of resistance or currents which end by sweeping us away.

For the like reason, we cannot subjugate the universe and bend it to our own ends, and we cannot any the more quite subjugate that little universe, ourselves. The one is a rebel like the other, for they correspond, being formed of the same clay and submitting at bottom to the same laws.

But this question, which seems new, is no other than the preceding. Progress exists in moral as in natural history: only it is much slower, because of the infinite complexity of the conditions that have to be realised in order that it may increase. But in any case, since it is relative on the one side, it cannot be absolute on the other: it is always restrained, partial, and consequently illusory, when we desire to relate it to the infinity of our aspirations towards the good, even as material progress shows itself illusory in respect of our aspirations to happiness, as our scientific or philosophic progress shows itself illusory in relation to a complete taking possession of the truth.

A humble recourse to God as moral cause, and a religious rite which can unite to Him, and all the spiritual disciplines, which are intended by Churches for perfecting and driving the machinery of the heart, will therefore always be required. There will be need to perfect, not to slay: and in this regard as in all others human progress goes normally towards the development and purification, not the ruin, of religion.

Now that we have defined and justified religious feeling in general, let us see after what fashion Catholic Christianity regards this feeling: how it gives satisfaction, and a greater satisfaction, to what the universal soul seeks clearly or obscurely: how it sets out thence for a new effort and causes us to attain transcendence, content only when it has obtained for us, in addition to what we desire, all that our nature permits, appealing to all the divine resources for fecundation and perfection.

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS FEELING AND CHRISTIANITY

WE must always return to our starting-point. The source of religious feeling is our vital insufficiency, and the need of seeking a substitute for powers which disappear, and for objects which do not satisfy us.

Our life is transient, our life is straitened, our life is mediocre, blind, morally difficult. And we thirst for liberty, truth, rectitude, fulness; we thirst for eternity.

That is why we welcome the offers of religious systems which promise to remedy our wretchedness.

Naturally, in accordance with the differences and degrees of civilisation, human desire, though identical at bottom, will take different forms, and the response to this desire will also be different. But that religion which claims to be the true and definitive Religion must prove at the very least that it has gone deep enough to reach fundamental human nature, independently of what distinguishes its various groups, here or there, to-day or to-morrow; and deep enough also to reach the Divinity, not indeed in its fundamentals, which are inaccessible, but at least in its authentic notion and in its true relation to us.

Christianity claims to satisfy this condition, and recognising God for what He is, since it proceeds from Him, and man too for what he is, because the Creator and the Revealer are but one, it can furnish all that our life requires, and procure for it thereby its total and definitive result.

Let us see, in brief detail, how, in Christianity, the human soul which calls is joined to God who furnishes the reply.

In Christianity, a perfect notion of God is at the base of all doctrine and all moral or ritual practice. It may rightly be said that no thought, instinctive or abstract, has the means of approaching such an ideal, or consequently of responding to what humanity, in its full knowledge of itself, demands and hopes when it invokes the religious object.

Everywhere and always the idea of God has broken down on this fatal alternative: either excessive humanisation, the Divine debasing itself on the pretext of serving us; or else abstraction which refines away the Divine and cuts it off from all useful communication with us.

When the systems and religions outside Christian philosophy are studied, they are seen to be constantly wrecked on one or other of these reefs. God a fetish or overgrown man, God the formula of the world or vague universal substance; the one serving for nothing, the other serving only

to mislead; these were the two poles of error between which every soul oscillated.

What was necessary in order to free oneself from them was to push the idea of transcendence so deep as to attain, in closing the circle of thought, to the immanence of the Divine in being, and, reciprocally, to understand its inwardness in so complete a fashion as to realise it to be the Infinite, present everywhere in its grandeur. This effort no one made. The majority of fundamental errors still show tokens of this. The Christian soul alone avoids the fatality of incomplete views. It has known the Heavenly Father, the God of the Heart, the God of the Conscience, the God of Nature, the God of life, the God of history through *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,* that is to say through the successive generations, and it has known the God of Augustine in whom Plato is set right, and the God of Thomas Aquinas in whom Aristotle is recognised even while he is surpassed.

When we consider that *no* doctrine attained to the pure idea of creation—that is to say of existence and the Source of existence, of the Absolute in which all is rooted, and the subsisting deficiency which issues out of it, we admit that all was wrong from its very foundation, and that it would never be possible, at this price, to satisfy the human spirit in all its states, to respond to thought and life in all their demands, seeing that it is by this contact of the real nothing and of the vivifying all that religious construction, in thought as in reality, commences.

The Christian conception of the Divine prepares, by the depth of its penetration, the universality of its extension and its full theoretical or practical sufficiency. It satisfies both Socrates and those who call him a blasphemer. Its God is at the same time popular and learned, ideal and living, interior and universal: He exhausts intelligibility and closes its circle: He embraces reality and contains it from its innermost to its summit, from its beginnings to its ends.

Such a God, the Alpha and Omega of all dimensions, can be made the object of religious life, if this life be a supplement to the ordinary life in every direction in which we have felt our limitations.

For this very reason, this God, being the Master of duration as He is of existence, will have the power to lay the foundations of His work in us in a fashion which will satisfy us, because in moulding the future to its shape He will correct what seems unalterable and be able to conquer what seems most unconquerable in it, the power of death.

It is true that in order to succeed in this, He must Himself assume that there is in us what He has implanted. A seed

of immortality and a possibility of full redress, thanks to a fundamental rectitude which nothing can injure: that is the twofold and necessary condition. But also, in order to safeguard it, the authentic religion will add to its pure conception of God a correct notion of man.

The "chimera" of Pascal and of all the profound analysts has been more accurately detailed by Christianity than any thinkers have done or can do without its help. Greatness and wretchedness in every order, with greatness for end, this it is which in its eyes is the result of the original wretchedness and greatness, that of our very being in its inner constitution. Matter and Spirit, Heaven and earth mingled, animality with an overflow of sublime life, sin grafted on an irrepressible love of good, death enclosed in his lower vitality and immortality inscribed high up on the pediment of his temple: such is man.

This is the explanation of his strange destiny, which sits astride of two worlds and two states which are almost disparate. Down here, the starting-points and outlines, in each order and each field of our researches; up yonder the realisations. Here the inequalities, the risks, which depend upon material conditions; elsewhere the reign of justice and perfect harmony.

Nothing that comes through matter will have decisive consequences. By the spirit, we, united by religion to the First Spirit, can be redeemed from everything; suffering, death, cruel and tempting insufficiency, ignorance, slavery, spiritual infirmity, the strain and rupture of our attachments.

By its means what is inexplicable in life can be justified; the mystery of our aspirations, which reality condemns, can be explained; our effort will find its end within reach, although far off. And it will be through himself that each man will attain his end, as human honour and the natural instinct of liberty demand; but it will be also thanks to the association of the Divine, which is a normal prolongation of nature, as the streamlet of the glacier remains normally in continuity with its mass.

Do we not recognise the teaching that makes the Christian view of our destinies something so high and yet so simple?

According to the Faith, our life is indeed in two stages, and it is passed on a twofold theatre; here and on the other side, now and in the eternal future. Death is the frontier.

Only, it must be understood that these two stages of life do not make two lives; that between these two domains there is no water-tight partition. Human destiny is one, and the two domains we have mentioned are not really two: the Gospel unites them under a common denomination. It is "the Kingdom of God." Heavenly or earthly, what does

it matter? All is heavenly which God has created, which He penetrates with His action and fills with His love. God makes the bond between Heaven where He awaits men and earth which He appoints for their starting-place. Death is only a passage on a plane passing from one life to another, from life in rough outline to life transformed, and for the Christian it bears the character of an event like any other, not more tragic and anguishing because it is definitive.

No more is it the leap into the dark, the annihilation of all hope, the end of everything, and therefore the flat contradiction given to our thirst for life; it is a sleep into which perhaps it is hard to plunge, but which repairs our strength and communicates to us the might of immortality. It is also redemption, considered in the light of this terrifying transience which seems to us in this mortal life the law of everything. All things move on towards their end: *πρός τέλος αὐτῶν πάντα κινεῖται*, said the old poets. All moves on towards life, says Christianity; for all moves towards God.

When a great train plunges into the Gothard tunnel, it might be thought that it is engulfed in the darkness, and that the mountain devours it; but the Swiss peasant well knows that on the other side are the plains of Italy, and the light of the lakes, and the beauty of the enchanted islands. So death, for the Christian, is a march towards the light.

Our vital wretchedness, then, is conquered on the side where it was most universally sad; since death was above all things the disturber of happiness, and so it seemed that one avoided all the rest merely in order to stumble the more violently against this supreme and inexorable obstacle.

In the second place, religion promises to us, for this immortal continuation of our destiny, a development in value which corresponds term by term to our humanity considered in its perfection, in its highest and humblest attributes as well as in their harmonious synthesis.

For our intelligence we are promised a further flowering in the truth; for our will the putting aside of its obstacles, and for our organism itself, reconstituted one day in conditions which, truth to tell, quite escape us, an equilibrium and integrity without suffering.

With a view to permitting this renewal which supposes very numerous parallels in the surroundings in which life is developed, we are promised their complete transformation and reorganisation. The *new heavens* and *new earth* of which the Bible tells us form part of the religious plan of the universe.

May we be permitted to remark that several even of the most recent philosophies have dreamed—dreamed, I say, as far as they are concerned—of a vital environment in some

future age less hostile, better adapted to our desires of expansion.[1] They have constructed hypotheses; Christianity puts forward words of God.

However this may be, the only appreciable limit which Christianity imposes on this future is that which we ourselves would like to impose on it, and if, here and now, our life is partly what we make it, in the complete plan, which involves no further chances, it will be entirely so.

We shall be happy in the exact measure in which we shall have accepted happiness.

For, as Kant has observed, in a wise organisation of things, for the being which fulfils its law there can be no limit to the right to happiness except its own lack of submission to that law. If, then, our human value were complete, in the sense that we entirely fulfilled our law, God, who always fulfils His, would cause us to attain, according to the Christian plan, to the highest end to which our nature can aspire.

But then, by reason of the unity of plan which presides over our complete destiny, if our life be truly one, as we affirmed just now, we ought to be concerned here and now with this supreme attainment which religion describes; it ought to count here and now as a living thing, to colour our existence, even as earthly perspectives are tinted with the colours of heaven.

Since this world and the other make up only one; since our wretchedness, our sufferings, our transience are only provisional and relative to a progressive plan of development, we can from a very lofty point of view say that they are only apparent. Does one call a child impotent because it does not walk *yet?* or an apprentice wretched because he has *as yet* no salary? or a rising officer unhappy because he is not *yet* a general?

Napoleon used to say that every soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack; and by this he meant to declare the right of a soldier, if he becomes worthy, to reach the highest grades under a régime which takes no account of rank or birth.

Likewise, in a very real sense, a child in its cradle is already a man, for he has in himself all the resources which by simple expansion will cause him to become a man.

And in the same way the Christian, who carries sure hopes in his heart; who has in himself, once he is united to God, once he has become a citizen of the Kingdom, the principle of progress which ought to lead him so high; the Christian must feel himself already in possession of his sublime good.

He is already an immortal, though he die; he is blessed,

[1] *Cf.* Renouvier, *Histoire et Solution des Problèmes Métaphysiques*, last chapter. Paris: F. Alcan.

though he suffer; he feels himself delivered from the evil, although he be in submission to the likeness of sinful flesh. United to the heart of Him who is chief of the Kingdom and always obedient to His providence, how should he not have full vital security? What can he lack of those helps that are truly required for self-realisation? Of what satisfaction, of what consolation can he claim that he was deprived, except to obtain better and greater, and hence without regret, or in any case without disquietude? *I superabound with joy in the midst of my tribulations,* says Paul; *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.*

All the present organisation of things, including therein nature, though indifferent, though brutal; society, though unjust and though oppressive; and ourselves, though we contradict ourselves, though we are tempted—this organisation, provided that it be bound to religious thought, and borne along in its movement, is seen, from this point of view, to be fully and universally sufficient. Sufficient, I say, through the mediation of filial confidence and of hope; satisfying, as far as the provisional can be so; happy, as the road to happiness is happy.

Such is the conception of life which Christianity proposes.

And this conception is widened still more by the fact that we are invited to enter into the universal life in order to be collaborators therein with God.

The destiny of a being endowed with reason is not entirely confined within itself. Its own case is not the whole of its care. When it plays its part, since its reason is a faculty of the whole of being, it proposes to its will all the good as its object. In the total reality it feels itself a subordinate, captive portion, having neither the power nor the right to realise itself otherwise than in the realisation of the creative plan, and seeing in this, firstly the plan itself in its entirety, still more the divine good which is its supreme end, and only in the last event its particular case and its own ends.

To love God and the work of God beyond everything, trusting that one will find oneself in Him the more one is lost in Him, but ready if necessary to be lost in Him without recovery; this is the supreme *élan* which Christian thought calls forth.

This supposes that in its eyes God is God and not the *Deus ex machina* of pagan vision, and even less a metaphysical expression, without action and without demands: a servitor or a dream. The infinite positivity of God who is Creator and End, of God who is Love, and of God who is ineffable Thought; such is, for Christianity, the centre of everything.

And I say that for this reason alone we attain in Him to the highest point religious thought could ever reach. All progress, henceforth, can only consist in developing this; by developing it, I mean making it fully comprehended, by laying bare its consequences and multiplying its action.

As for pushing further, in the way that a new religion pretends to respond better to the religious appeal starting from the human heart: this is entirely impossible, because the aspiration which is in us has been utterly fathomed in it, and because to suppose such a religion true, as it is in fact, this aspiration must be satisfied.

However, we have not yet laid hold of the main point. Christianity is not only the last stage and the supreme attainment of all religious movement; it enters upon a new world, which thought, left to its own initiatives, had hardly suspected, which desire does not attain, and which places us, when we go to dwell there, in the Ineffable pure and simple.

We must now study this new aspect of Christianity. It is often the only one which is not discussed, and yet, if it be ignored, there can be known of Christianity neither what it is nor what it wants; and its organisation, which finds in this, as we shall show, the whole of its *raison d'être,* can only be judged from outside; and that is not judging, but appreciating at haphazard, without justice and without thoroughness.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURAL

TO show the bond which logically unites the supernatural—for it is with that that we are now dealing—to the spontaneous motions and to the ordinary law of our nature, St. Thomas Aquinas proposes a very seductive theory.

When, says he, we see natures co-ordinated in such a way as to form an entirety, each of them, beside its own motion, obeys a motion which is impressed on it by the higher nature. It is thus that the sea, left to itself, spreads like a sheet and espouses the shape of the globe: but the heavenly bodies attract it, and by swelling its mass, produce the phenomenon of the tides, which are natural to it only if it be considered as in relation with the stars.

So, he adds, man is bound to God by his intelligent activity; then his intelligence permits him to attain to the Universal with regard to the objects of experience, placing him by that alone on the road of the Universal, which is the First Principle.

It will be normal, then, and in conformity with an unquestioned induction, that human nature should develop on a double plan: that which determines its nature, as analysis reveals it to us, and that, in addition, to which this supreme Mover, supremely good and great, which we call God, would elevate it.

This attractive theory had been outlined already by several philosophies of antiquity. Aristotle furnishes its lineaments in his celebrated interpretation of genius, genius of intelligence or genius of virtue, which is nothing else, according to him, than the sudden irruption of the Divine substituting itself for our reasonings and discretions in order to bear us higher and further.

The morals of Eudemus, the immediate issue of his spirit, present us with an admirable page on this subject, and Plutarch, in whom one finds reflected whatever is best in the ancient philosophy, has written in the *Banquet of the Seven Sages* this astonishing passage which moves Père Gratry to enthusiasm:

"The body is the instrument of the soul, and the soul is the instrument of God.

"And as the body has motions which are proper to it, but has also others more beautiful which come from the soul, so the soul, in its turn, has its own order of actions and motions, but it can also, as the most perfect of instruments, allow itself to be directed and moved by God, who works within it.

"If fire, wind, water and clouds are instruments of God

for life or death, who will believe that living beings cannot be adapted to the strength of God and work with that strength, and be inspired by the motions of God, as the arrow obeys the Scythians and the lyre the Greeks?"

It is clearly, as may be seen, the theory of St. Thomas Aquinas, only the latter makes another and even bolder use of it; and the difference results from the revelations of the Gospel, from which come to us higher certitudes and inspirations.

What antiquity suspects is that God works in us to carry us further than we can go by ourselves, and for example to see through us, in hours of inspiration, what remains obscure to our reasoning intelligence; to do by us, under the form of what we call heroism, what is beyond the infirmity of our will. But the domains of life to which this supplementary action urges us are still domains on our own level; what comes to us from them will be of the same nature as the results we can acquire by ourselves. Our life remains constant in its essence, in its natural operations, in its valuation of objects; nothing is changed but the fulness of the action, and we do not become divine for being thus moved by the Divinity.

Now Christian thought goes further; it understands us to be united to God not only as the moved to its mover, each of the two remaining in its own order; but in an intimate fashion which allows the communication of lives, in such a way that thoughts and loves are common, destinies mingled, objects identical.

It is not a notion, a thing always exterior, it is a communication of the Divinity which is proposed to us.

And to understand what is meant by this in Christianity, we must recall what a gamut of relations can be imagined between God and His creature.

One of the extremes is well enough represented by the thought of Deist Rationalism, which sees God as purely exterior and not condescending to intervene in our life otherwise than by the mediation of general laws. The other extreme is furnished by Pantheism, which confounds God and man in the unity of one same substance. Between the two there is room for innumerable intermediaries; but the nearest to pure Rationalism is that which has just been described in the teaching of the ancient philosophers, and the nearest to Pantheism, whose value and depth of teaching it appropriates while rejecting its excesses, is the Christian system of the supernatural.

According to this latter, man certainly ought not to be brought to confound himself with his Principle; for we can neither abase God to our measure, nor on the contrary dissolve man on the breast of the Godhead. Their two natures

ought to remain distinct, and of this distinction, putting the divine transcendence at its highest, we could never have a sufficiently strong feeling. But distinction, however, is nothing more than a vague word, which admits of many different qualities and degrees of precision.

Even in the material world, there can be distinction between two things of which one is here and the other there; distinction between two things in contact; distinction between two things welded together; distinction between two liquids intimately mixed with each other; distinction, though relative in this case, between two substances chemically combined into one sole substance, etc. In the spiritual order the kinds of combination can be even richer, and we must not be astonished at seeing Christianity adopt a Biblical formula, which looks like a kind of blasphemy at first sight, to express the union which it dreams of establishing between the God which it preaches and humanity; *I have said you are gods, all ye sons of the Most High.* It is to a certain extent literally that Christianity understands these expressions of the Psalmist.

Our life emanating from God is even already in a sense a divine thing. From what have we received what we are and what we have? There is only one source, and it is indeed necessary to drink from it. It is needful to drink therefrom also in order to preserve and develop the activity and the existence we have received at the start. All being is an irradiation of the Divine Being, all movement one of Its actions, every ideal a reflection of Its thought, every good which attracts us a snare set by Its Heart.

Only all this leaves us very far from being able to call it, in the ordinary sense of the words, a participation in the divine life. God is with us fundamentally in each of these things; but as for us, we are not with Him, because, turned outward by all our powers of knowledge, whose food on this plane is the sensible, we find ourselves incapable of penetrating into this God, who is in us, in a way which truly gives Him to us. He sustains us as a mother who carries her sleeping child, or if a rather more exact comparison be preferred, as the ether wherein the worlds are bathed, which insinuates itself into the innermost heart of everything, and which we have taken thousands of years to discover.

Before God we are thus imprisoned in a manner of knowing, loving, acting, in a word of living, which does not attain Him, though He penetrates us and supports us.

By our flesh we vegetate; by our senses we feel; by our intelligence we raise ourselves to the idea; but the idea is a *conception,* an abstraction, a reflection; it does not give us being, and with regard to immaterial things, and with regard especially to God, the Transcendent, the Separate, the Infinite, the Abstract Idea, it falters; it permits us to stammer

of Him, but the intimate nature of God, His essence in Himself, remains a mystery to us. We are not on His plane. The will-o'-the-wisp knows not the solid depths beneath it; thus the droll life which we lead here knows not the depths of God, whence it emerges as a light flame.

Now our Christian tradition assures us that God has willed for us more than this, and that if we wish to let ourselves be borne away by this increase of divine action in us whereof St. Thomas Aquinas spoke just now, we must go and plunge into the full life of God, make of our own life as it were an episode of His, be conscious of Him, as He is conscious of Himself; love what He loves and will what He wills as henceforth our own objects, connatural to our transplanted soul, as the sensible and its objects are connatural to us here.

The intuition of God by the mind and the taste of God by the heart, as now we have the intuition and taste of material things by the senses—it is this that Christianity proclaims to us.

It is foolishness; we recognise that. It may well be that the Greeks of the Areopagus would have laughed at it. But they laughed also at the foolishness of the Cross, which has made its way across the world. And it is precisely the foolishness of the Cross that involves this counterpoise. *It was needful that Christ should die to rise into His glory* and for us to rise thither with Him: but it is reciprocally necessary that we should rise into that glory whereinto Christ rose, to justify such a death.

When the blood-red sun goes down at evening into the night, it is to prepare dawn and noonday. This fall of a star is a pledge. A sunset is only the promise of a dawn. So the fall of a God into human life and death is a pledge of our attaining the highest success.

When that which is perfect is come, says St. Paul, *that which is in part in us shall be done away. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then* we shall see the Divine *face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known* (1 Cor. xiii. 10).

This teaching is common in the New Testament. *You will be made partakers of the very nature of God,* said Peter to the faithful. It is because he too remembers that Christ said: *This is eternal life, that they may know Thee,* O Father (John xvii. 3).

Well, considerable theological work has been done since on these data of revelation, and these data, authenticated by religious authority, have become for us the law, the fundamental theme which all Christian functioning is destined to explicate or to serve.

It does not belong to our present enquiry to demonstrate historically the fact of this revelation. We take it as it is so

as to draw out its consequences from the point of view of the existence, the constitution and prerogatives of the Church. For this it is enough to judge its contents. Others have supplied the proof.

Pursuing then the analysis of the fact, we may remark that it is after this life that the benefit of the divine intentions in so far as we are concerned is offered to us. The question is one of future, not of immediate enjoyment. But by reason of this unity of our destiny to which we referred just now, if for us the future must be such, such also, due proportion being observed—in capital, if I may say so, though not in usufruct—the present itself must be.

Every successful issue necessarily qualifies the stages which prepare for it. No evolution can be conceived except by successive transformations of an element already differentiated and in specific relation to its term. Although the oak is an oak, the acorn must needs be an acorn, that is to say not an oak in little, as the old naturalists believed, but an oak in potentiality.

Likewise, if man is to be God one day, in the participatory sense that we have just defined, he must be God even now, in the same sense, with the sole difference that his Godhead is displayed in germ.

Which means, without strained metaphor, that, supported by the Divinity as every creature is, he must be more soaked in it, united to it more deeply, invaded in his being and his powers by this same influence whereby we believe that God lives and which we call the Holy Spirit. This must be so in order that our religious acts may have the transcendent import which is required in order that we may arrive by a normal evolution where we are willed to attain.

It is this compenetration of the divine and human in the regenerate man which is called grace. And its greatest doctor, St. Augustine, said of it that it is the "soul of our soul," to express that the relation of the soul to the body, as its principle of life, is found in the highest degree between our soul and the divine influence which actuates it. *If any man love Me,* the Saviour said, *My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him* (John xiv. 23). Sublime and mysterious indwelling, which is for us the whole of religion, since it is the bond, solid and almost substantial, in place of being purely ideal, which unites us to the religious object, the Deity in person.

And we see that religion takes thereby, in Christianity, a sense and an import which infinitely surpass all that we have been able to say of it when reasoning concerning it only from man's point of view. The quite abstract definition which we have given of it is going to take on a concrete sense

by new precisions and by imposing a transposition on each of its terms.

Religion, we said, is the bond which attaches the human creature to the mysterious reality on which he feels himself to depend, himself and his immediate environment; and on which in consequence depends his destiny. But the bond of which we were treating was not defined; we did not know where we were going nor to what we could attain.

All these notions now become precise to integrate the Christian notion.

The religious bond is no longer any bond whatever, it is a union, a community of life, by communication of the principle of that life, the Holy Spirit; by consecutive communication of thoughts, of loves, of divine wills, obscure here, but clear on high.

The Divinity to which we are thus united is no longer just something. It remains ineffable, and It is even more so since we began by leaving the old paganism and the dry rationalism of philosophers—childish anthropomorphism and the subtle anthropomorphism of metaphysics. But we know of God, through Christianity, that He is living and loving under the form of a Trinity; Three in One and One in Three. Not that one wishes to divide or to multiply His substance; but there are thus introduced into it relations which, as men of stammering speech, we express by the image of *persons*.

The Trinity is the affirmation in God of a vital richness which is not satisfied by unity without any distinction; which is however sovereign unity, tending towards self-expansion, as it were from three centres of upspringing, in three terms of interior relation which exclude solitude without introducing any division or correlative multiplication.

Now this enrichment of God, being at our service, enriches also religion, which draws therefrom some of its most fundamental points of view, both in dogma and in mysticism.

We know henceforward the meaning of our universe; it is an organisation of welfare, a factory where matter, worked by life, has for its function to make souls open out, to furnish them with a theatre of action, some of their means, some of their ends, and thereby to collaborate in the definitive work which is itself spiritual and transcendent.

In place of the dead universe of which Diderot spoke, with its pulleys, wheels and cords, we have under our eyes the living world seen by St. Francis of Assisi, the collaborator of God and the divine man, the attentive and always docile workman of the great work of love which is the final apotheosis, the re-entry into God of all the beings that started out from Him. In such sort that all action of the universe may be an action divine and divinising; that all the progress

of the universe may be a march towards God, as well as every action of man, even the most ordinary.

Whether you eat, or whether you drink, or whatsoever thing you do, do all, said St. Paul, *for the glory of God,* that glory which is also ours, since it is in us that it will shine forth. Likewise, that the universe is aroused and bestirs itself, that plants spring up, that life murmurs everywhere, that the giant evolutions of suns and the exhausted vibrations of atoms realise infinities of greatness and littleness —all this is for the advancement of the divine ends, and is therefore Christian work, Christian progress, a march broken by halts and recoils, but tenacious and always efficacious, towards the eternal kingdom of God whereof the present also is the painful baited hook.

Lastly, destiny is just this; the achievement of the work begun in the moving universe and the tormented life around us; it is our entry and that of all thinking creatures into the divine rest which will be the supreme activity, since it will be life in God.

The life of God murmuring in us, the partition of unconsciousness which prevents us now from perceiving it, from tasting it, although it is in everything, everywhere, and in ourselves more than in all else; this partition broken, dissolved like the thick cloud under the scorching sun, and through this new gap the inrush of the Divine into us and the divine beatitude become the lot of the frailty that we are; that is the final goal.

All the life of the soul that is going to be created to correspond to it, all the effort to be furnished, all the appropriate means that must needs be set to work, all this serves for justification to the Church; this is her *raison d'être.*

Before coming to it, we must retrace our steps a little, and show how the religious life in general, and then the Christian life in particular, demand the creation of a society.

Of that society we have next to treat. But the first thing to be dealt with is the principle. The reasons which we shall give for it, so far as they are mastered, will bear us along by degrees to the ultimate conclusions which are what we desire to investigate, and the end of this work.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL CHARACTER OF RELIGIOUS FEELING

I WILL only remark in passing the capital importance which this question assumes in French politics to-day.

We hear our legislators proclaim unceasingly their respect for the individual conscience, though it be a religious conscience, and themselves anticlericals.

All the same, all their efforts tend to dissociate us, and to reduce us to the state of amorphous dust. They can bear no organised society other than what they call a *lay society*, no government other than their government and no social finality other than their temporal aspirations.

It must be allowed that from the political point of view there is some excuse for such a state of mind. It is certain that the cohabitation and compenetration of the two societies, the one temporal, the other spiritual, having the same subjects and a crowd of concurrent interests, is an extremely delicate matter, and one which may create difficulties even on the most favourable hypothesis—namely, when the governors are religious as well as the religious folk patriotic. When the social power falls into the hands of aggressive atheism, and the religious folk find themselves thrown back into an opposition which in its turn may be excessive, it is not easy to say what may happen.

But it would be very unphilosophic, to say the least, to abandon a truth by reason of the complications which arise from it.

Life is made up of these complications. Our prudence is given us to enable us to make the best of them. Would the problem of the spiritual and the temporal be resolved by using authority to get rid of one of its fundamental data?

Be this as it may, it is hence that divergences arise.

Many people are of the opinion that religion is an exclusively private affair, and that the greatest concession that can be allowed to it is that it may form sympathetic groups, associations like those which are formed around the memory of a great man, a banquet and a speech representing their whole function. A society properly so called, and a form of government; these our doctrinaires show themselves incapable of tolerating.

Now the starting-point of such opinions is a Utopia of comparatively recent origin: a Utopia which has come to light many times in the brains of isolated thinkers, but whose collective influence and systematic arrangement seem to date only from the eighteenth century. In any case it is in that

period, and in particular in the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau, that its real sources exist for us.

It consists in thinking that society is a creation more or less artificial and arbitrary, founded on a contract to which one could agree or refuse to agree, as if men had racked their brains to ask themselves: Shall we live in society or not?

If we accept such a starting-point for human society, it would be natural to say: Let us examine what we ought to admit and what to reject as articles of the social contract. Let us make a selection among the ends of life. A first portion, comprising what has to do with civil life, shall be socialised: a second, in which, *ex hypothesi,* are religious ends, shall remain an individual question. We will not speak of it at all in our associations, at least officially; no authority properly so called shall intervene in it, and thus no constituted Church will be legal or have any *raison d'être.*

These deductions would be quite natural. Only, it is individualism, and that alone, which can speak thus. Now individualism, dogmatic individualism conceived as the starting-point of society, is to-day ranked among those false alloys which are being slowly broken up by the fire of psychological and social science.

It is not true that man is an individual who joins his fellow to form a society. Man, real man, concrete man, is a social element first of all, an ingredient in the mass, then rising gradually and with effort to the consciousness and dignity of individuality. That is the real order of things, and it is the reverse of individualism. Individuality is a thing man conquers; it is not a starting-point.

Besides, when once conquered, conscious and free individuality ought not to be employed in turning on nature and defying its law, but in understanding and realising better what nature demands.

Man, the child of society, freed from the joint-stock life which he led at first so that he might raise himself to the dignity of autonomous consciousness, should tell himself that he is a *social animal,* as Aristotle defined him; and that therefore he must preserve whatever permits his nature to reveal itself fully in harmonious and rich activity.

And then, freely and deliberately, no longer confusedly and instinctively as formerly, he ought to sanction society, to accept his social existence as he accepts his individual existence, and to consecrate himself henceforth not to the destruction, but to the perfection of the hive, knowing that the honey can only be well guarded by the subtle and strong scaffolding of the cells, by the protective wall that envelops it, by all the conditions which make of it a single whole: a new thing, and one infinitely more precious than the sum of tiny

stores, gathered by each separate bee, and the living dust of a scattered swarm.

If these conclusions could be doubted, I would say: Look at what takes place with the child: see whether he is conscious of himself otherwise than as a member of a group: whether he can, apart from this group, perfect himself and become a man. A child that is left alone, apart from initiation into society, becomes a stammering animal. He does not know whether he exists; and truth to tell, he does not exist, at least as a reasonable creature.

The child knows his mother and lives by her: he comes into informative and useful contact with those who represent the social reality for him, long before he takes possession of himself and knows that he is an individual.

Man drinks in society with his mother's milk; he is spiritually nourished on it, even as it is society that has created him corporally by means of physiological heredity.

If we wish to pursue further and to ask ourselves how the race itself is formed and is started on its march, no more in this case should we have before us isolated individuals, without attachments, who ask each other, in a sort of primitive congress, if it be well to live in groups or no. We should find, according as we preferred to adopt the creationist or the evolutionist hypothesis, in the first case a couple, that is to say something that is a society already, the one partner finding in the other, materially as well as morally, *bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh;* then a third being, unconscious at first, and arriving by means of them, that is by means of the embryonic social body which the first couple would form, to the consciousness and development of manhood.

On the evolutionist hypothesis, as, duly corrected or interpreted, it becomes acceptable to the philosopher, we should see man awake to himself, by a new effort of creative power, at the breath of the Spirit immanent in all things, in the bosom of a living society which has supplied him with all his life, preparing for him by an agelong elaboration this subtle and rich instrument, this lute of a thousand strings, which the Muse Intelligence will in due time cause to vibrate.

Let the question of his individual or collective origin, however, be as it may, see if man does not show, by his actual and adult constitution, that the socialisation of all his resources is a primordial necessity for him. A necessity, I would say, that is more than psychological, since in the eyes of science it is physiological first, psychological only afterwards: or rather both at once, but the one because of the other.

There is in us, considered as individuals, a lack of stability,

of coherence, of unity, so to say, of mental existence, which the most profound analysts have noted, and which constitutes in their eyes the starting-point of the social need.

We suffer, individually, from a tendency to diffusion; a diffusion of ideas, of feelings, of strength; and consequently a tendency to powerlessness, a tendency to inexistence, since we only exist through unitive concentration.

By reason of this lack of solidity of the whole man, each of us, feeling ill-assured of himself, feeling himself but part of himself, being vaguely conscious of his trouble and his incompleteness, experiences the need of leaning on others. And he feels this, be his particular character what it may; for it is not a question of the special need which some people have of the help of others; we are speaking of men, and consequently of every man; it is a question of the foundations of our nature.

No man is complete except by means of other men. The two sexes are normally perfected by each other; both enter spontaneously into graduated groupings where the personality is more clearly conscious of itself, completes itself, and at the same time receives support.

How often it happens that we do not know what we think except after having heard it said, or we will with clearness only under the urge of associated sympathetic wills! Even those who affect singularity like to do so in concert. We only feel strongly even those things which our deepest tendencies suggest, when we take our place in the chain of vital electricity which society makes.

These things have been said in our time with a scientific precision which cannot be attempted here. It suffices to refer to contemporary psychologists, all of whom furnish documents and proofs for the thesis.

The individual who is isolated loses his value more and more, in the eyes of science. As physically we are in connection and solidarity with all, so are we psychologically. Society supports us as the universe supports us, and in the same manner as an appropriated exterior environment is necessary to our organism in order that the latter may be preserved, may develop and flourish, so an appropriated social environment is necessary for our feelings and thoughts in order that they may be firm, may progress and flourish.

It is just for that reason that each of us takes so personal an interest in all that ensures the unity and permanence of his group. Does a man think himself respected if his wife, his son, his brother are ill spoken of? Does a Frenchman think he is respected if his country is maligned, humiliated or outraged? There are people who so far forget themselves as to speak in that way; but to take them seriously, and to think them in consequence capable of acting accordingly,

would be to avow that they are monsters. All our instincts would be arrayed against them; they would have to flee from the reprobation of men.

Normally, and when a man truly lives a human life, he discovers himself in the society to which he belongs. It is a prolongation of personality, an enrichment of existence, that he meets there. He feels himself to have benefited if any good happens to it; he feels himself injured if it suffers. Every event which concerns it is for him a personal event, and if any enemy comes along to attack it, he feels himself attacked, and indeed he is so. Would not a building be attacked if the buttresses or outbuildings were threatened?

Now let us see if these reflections are applicable to the religious order. But first of all, why should they not be? Their character is general and simply human. Consequently, to say that the religious fact is really a human fact enables us to add: It will be social in form.

There would be only one way of excluding it from the social, in order to throw it back entirely into the individual order; namely, to say that religious feeling, admitted to be a human feeling, has yet nothing about it whereby it may be recognised as possessing an autonomy, as responding to a special end, distinct from others.

This is indeed the position taken up in our days by some philosophers, the offspring of liberal Protestantism for the most part, unless they be disaffected Catholics, who desire none the less to preserve from their past what Renan called, in a celebrated phrase, *the perfume of the broken vase.*

According to these philosophers, religion is only a supererogatory feeling, a spiritual luxury, not responding to a separate end, but to a special aspect of other ends, to a point of view from which we should envisage realities, by reason of a certain inborn disposition.

We have the real, to which correspond science, art, industry, commerce, and all human disciplines, including morality, and we have what they call *the divine,* which corresponds to an excess of interior activity in us, yet has not the right to pose as a separate reality, nor to formulate demands of its own.

Ask a man what he needs in order to live; he will tell you, for example, Clothing, food, lodging; or perhaps, Truth, beauty, justice. But once he is lodged, nourished, instructed or interested, there is no need of lodging, nourishing, instructing his image in a mirror. So, when once life is socialised in its positive aspect, in material conditions, moral conditions, intellectual conditions, there is no room to ask for the socialisation of religion, since to this school of thought religion adds nothing to our ends; but only makes us regard

in a certain way, by reason of our faculty of the ideal, the same realities that the foregoing socialisation obtains for us.

"God," cried Vacherot, "is the ideal of the world: the world is the reality of God." When a man has spoken thus, I can well understand that he does not feel the need of a religious society destined to make us pray to God, honour God and serve God in common, seeing that this society exists already as far as it is possible for it to do so.

If God is the world envisaged from the point of view of the ideal, our relations with God are relations with the world envisaged from the point of view of the ideal: our religion is only that, and our religious society is Society and no more, regarded in the same aspect and profiting by this faculty of mystic dreaming which each of us has in himself.

The religion of truth, the religion of beauty, the religion of happiness: or the religion of silver, the religion of good cheer, the religion of physical force, the religion of pleasure, the religion of all that one would like among existing and possible things: these will be the only religions. Now, the societies which correspond to these things already exist: they are societies scientific, literary, artistic, financial, sporting, gastronomic—and deeper down, the family, the fatherland, leagues of peoples: then, for a later stage, organised humanity.

It will be noticed that Socialism projects in that direction all its dreams. It wishes to organise humanity in the name of an ideal of solidarity and justice which, for the best of its adherents, takes exactly the religious form. But the society which it wishes to found is not *one* special society, like the Catholic grouping, it is just *Society,* of which the actually existing Socialist groups are only the germ, and as it were the organising leaven.

Therefore, of what use is a society superposed on the others, and called a Church? A Church can only be conceived if it answers to a separate function: a function can only be conceived if it answers to a separate end. If God is not an end, but a point of view, "a category of the ideal," there is no need of a Church.

A man who talks in this fashion can only be referred to a treatise on God. As the author has attempted a humble essay, he points it out without recommending it rather than others.[1] In any case it will be seen there that God is not *the divine,* to follow the mystical and ambiguous language of certain men—a reflection, that is to say, an image projected on the sky, like a mirage in the Alps, which means nothing.

Already, our brief reflections at the start have attained something quite other than this vague subjective idol. We

[1] *Cf.* Sertillanges, *Les sources de la croyance en Dieu*, Perrin.

have met our religious end in digging down through our life to its foundations, to its primary support, and not in climbing the roofs to find I know not what useless pinnacle.

The religious end, or God, is not a dream; it is what creates us: it is not something made by our inward power of idealisation; it is what sustains us, just as we are in actual reality. It is then not an image after which we run, like a living mirror after the luminous speck it projects; it is the supreme Reality beside which we are only a transitory shadow, living and dying ere a second has sped on the great clock of time.

God is what is beneath our substance, at the root of our thoughts, beyond the sources of our heart, and at the same time behind the objects of our thought, behind the goods that we will, beneath the substance of the world that supports us.

The common substratum of our being, and of our surroundings; the ultimate basis of all, and the summit also, since it is to Him that we mount as it is from Him that we come; the Alpha and Omega of all things; the real Alpha, since we are real; the real Omega, in order that our action and the action of the world may not be vain: such is God.

Therefore, the end is laid down, religion has a special function, and the organ of religion, its society, the Church, cannot be confounded with associations formed for the exploitation of ordinary life.

Moreover, this general reason becomes more precise for us if we look more closely at what presupposes such an end, and over against it, at a nature such as ours.

Religious feeling ought to be socialised for the sole reason that it is a human feeling corresponding to an object of its own; such is our first conclusion. The second will be that religious feeling ought a fortiori to be socialised by reason of its special nature and of its conditions, in itself and in us.

* * * * *

One of the best works relating to the history of religions[1] mentions as inseparable from religious feeling a sort of "dissolution of the individual consciousness in the social consciousness." And the reason which the author puts forward is exactly that which we have furnished—namely, that the primitive feeling of man is not an individualist feeling, it is a feeling already—and one might say everywhere—collective. "The individual," he says, "became conscious of himself only in relation to his fellows. He does not project his ego into the society, but gets his ego from the society."

This is excellently said, and a multitude of facts belonging to religious history might be used to illustrate this affirmation.

It could be shown, for example, that "among primitive peoples, the gods are not considered as the recognised pro-

[1] Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manuel de l'histoire des religions*, Introduction to edition of 1906.

tectors or enemies of the individual, but of a society; of the tribe, clan, family, city, etc. The individual has no right to their assistance nor reason to fear their enmity otherwise than in consequence of this. If he has relations with them, it is not in his personal capacity, but as a member of the society."[1]

The proof of this is that in changing his society he changes his gods; the woman who marries adopts those of her spouse and the naturalised citizen those of his town.

Another proof is that religion everywhere shows itself the true social bond. At its origin religion is one with law; authority is exercised in the name of heaven and by immediate delegation; the gods are the first magistrates of the country; the law is the expression of their will, collective prosperity or mischance the result of their protection or of their anger. Wars are regarded as the conflicts between local gods who are jealous of each other. For the Greeks, history is as it were a divine drama where the happenings are only a reflection or an echo of what passes high up on Olympus. "The sceptre of Agamemnon is also the sceptre of Zeus," says Homer.

Among the Romans, the religious instinct is coloured in the same fashion. It is the gods of the Empire who will the Empire. Conquest is the religious means of the Roman as it is of Islam.

Later on, under Christianity, in which the spiritual is clearly distinguished from the temporal, the socialising power of the religious feeling is not for that reason reduced, but on the contrary is augmented; which proves clearly that it is religion itself, and by itself, that takes the collective form.

See the Catacombs, and that all-powerful attraction which causes the first Christians, vibrating with the same newborn enthusiasm, to prefer to meet under the earth and to risk seeing themselves buried rather than to lead a solitary religious life by themselves.

During the great turmoil of '93, the same scenes were reproduced in France: the catacombs are barns, the caves outbuildings where men risked the scaffold by hiding a priest, well knowing that the conscience is not bound to rite in occurrences so perilous.

I indicate these facts, which might be indefinitely multiplied, simply to show that history is friendly to us, and that from consulting her only it must be said that religious feeling, of itself, tends to form associations, to create authorities which are the bond of these associations; in short, it is feeling that takes a social form, in place of the *alone to the alone* which individualism would like to maintain or impose.

[1] L. Durckheim, *Revue philosophique*, April, 1906.

In justice, now, if we ask religious feeling for the wherefore of this almost violent tendency, we shall not be embarrassed to find a reply.

Why, in general, are we social beings? Because, as we have said, we are only complete by means of others, and we can only attain our end by means of others. Nature urges us to be and to do more than we can be or do by ourselves, and this instinct causes us to form societies. Now this reason is fundamentally the same as that which we invoke when we ask why we are religious beings.

All that we have said of the sources of actual religion can be summed up in this: we wish to be and we are not, we wish to live and we do not live, we wish to know and we do not know, we wish to have power and we have none, we wish to be happy and we are not so without a divine expansion, and this expansion we try to find through the religious life.

The reasoning, then, is the same in this case as in that.

Our social life permits us to be and to attain enormously more than we could be or attain by ourselves: the religious life permits us to attain infinitely more. It is a question of degree, carried to infinity, a mathematician would say; but the movement of soul is the same, the impulse of nature proceeds from the same need and the same desire, and it is for that reason that there is correlation between these two things, society and the religious life. Our nature makes their bond, and we could neither live the social life without its being completed in the religious life—and therefore the "lay society" is an anthropological error (unless one denies the religious end)—nor could we any the more live the religious life without it becoming a social life.

The case is made clearer, besides, when we distinguish the two fundamental aspects of the social life as we recalled them just now.

To be by means of others more than we can be by ourselves; such is the first. Now, if other men complete us from temporal points of view, all the more do they complete us so far as we are in relation with our common source.

The more fundamental a relation is, the less is it possible for it to divide us, the more it must unite us. Two deputies of the same party disagree on a question of its regulation; but they are united in politics. Two political systems dispute the direction to be given to the country's policy; but they are united when there is question of saving the country. A German and a Frenchman who combat so fiercely for hegemony or liberty, will find themselves comrades amid a savage tribe, where they are no longer a Frenchman and a German, enemies, but the united representatives of civilisation in face of what astonishes or offends it.

Does not the savage in his turn unite with the European against a wild animal? The wild animal itself, it might be said, feels itself our neighbour in face of the great convulsions of nature, because then it is no longer the man or the brute who are threatened; it is the living being which resists dead violence.

The deeper we go down within ourselves, the more do we feel fraternity with everything, and is it not one of our poet-philosophers who, to express this unity which we feel in certain moments envelop both our fundamental soul and inanimate nature itself, has said:

> A shaft of shining gold joins my heart with the sun,
> And slender silken threads unite it to the stars.

Therefore it is that all religious men have needed more or less, in order to raise themselves up to God, the collaboration of nature.

Therefore it is that the prophets, in lifting up their hearts, invite all creatures to join them, using their confused and solemn murmur as the orchestral bass of their hymns.

St. Francis asked the birds, the fishes, "his brother the sun" and "his sister the moon," the forest cascades and the groaning breezes, to lament with him the Passion of Christ, or with him to pray and to praise the Eternal.

It can all the more easily be understood how he and all the saints, all religious men in the measure in which they were religious, have been apostles. Apostles—that is to say, something like spiritual conquerors, men who cannot keep still except in so far as they have convinced and conquered their fellows, with the help of what there is in these latter of dormant good.

Analyse their feelings, and you will see that it is indeed the social instinct that urges them. They are religious, and to the extent that their brethren are not so, or are not so *with them,* they are unquiet; the religion of the others is lacking to them.

Alone with God, they are not themselves complete; they feel themselves divided, deprived of their natural attachments. And are they not truly so, since under the actual and individual differences which separate us, in the depths of our nature, where it touches God, one ought to find, or one is not really man, the fraternal unity which the word *humanity* expresses?

"I am a man, and nothing human is strange to me:" this sentence of the Latin poet finds its highest value on the plane of the religious life, because it is there, near the common source, that one is most exclusively man, stripped of all egoism and dissolving competition.

When to live religiously a man takes refuge in the ultimate depths of his soul, far from the combat of life and all our

trite distinctions, he cannot remain there alone. He may lose himself there for an instant; but as soon as he opens his eyes and sees one of his fellows, he recognises himself in him, he recognises his God in him, and he wishes to live the divine life with him.

It has been said: "Man is a wolf for man." It is never quite true, since we have just seen separatist or barbarous egoism tempered by the social instinct; but the religious man cannot be a wolf for man at all, even through interior solitude. Before God, he is no more a competitor, or isolated; he is a brother needing his brother, and needing him with a threefold need; need for himself, by sympathy and complementary unity; need for him, by natural friendship; need for God, by a higher devotion.

He wishes to be wholly himself, through his brother. He wishes that his brother also may become wholly himself, by means of him, and he wishes that God may be all in all, nothing being kept back from Him who has all rights, having all being.

In the second place, since attainment is the declared desire of all life, the religious life is going to feel compelled, if it wishes to realise what it seeks, to arm itself with all that can favour its work, to gather all its resources. Now if we have said that there is in us, considered as individuals, a weakness, a psychological inconsistency which requires society for all its ends; what will it be in face of the transcendent enterprise, the sublime adventure which religion attempts?

Here we have to connect man's thought with the Unknowable, to attain the Inaccessible, to enjoy the Ineffable. Assuredly we cannot do it unless the Ineffable bow down, unless the Inaccessible give itself over to us and the Unknowable reveal itself; but shall we not be able to invite It to condescend thus with all the more power if our desires be united? And could the reply of Him who is the common Father be, in place of an universal expansion, a private aside, a celestial invitation to egoism?

The act of God, in religion, must be collective, as much as and more than individual; but the act of man can never be collective enough, since it will never be rich enough, founded enough on his nature to utilise all its forces.

Let us think of what we must conquer in order to be at the height of such an end!

We must overcome the fascination of the sensible, which tends always to draw us away from that true depth where we say that the religious life dwells. It will be necessary to bridle passion, which drags us as it were by the feet, like that voluptuary of the Campo Santo at Pisa whom a devil

draws down while an angel strives to drag him back to the higher regions. It will be necessary to provide against the weakness of the mind, which the truth scatters, lets fall or throws into disputes. It will be necessary to stimulate our inertia in face of the Invisible and our dispersion of will in face of a task which demands a continuous effort.

We could go on enlarging this list indefinitely; we could develop at leisure the consequences of these multiplied impedimenta, and we should see how necessary it is, here more than anywhere, to appeal, in addition to individual resources, to the incomparably superior resources of social life.

If the tendency of to-day is to socialise scientific life, literary life, artistic life, industrial, economic, political life, more and more; more and more, I say, in the degree that all these things progress; if churches, in the etymological sense of the word, are constituted everywhere and for all purposes, because men come to the conclusion that that is the price of development, that isolation and the particularist spirit are the ruin of effort, compulsory stagnation, misery; with much greater right must religious movement, religious progress, religious attainment, which involve the gravest difficulties, as well as the highest pretensions, take this resource into account. To neglect it would be to refuse to be the tide which resists the earth and the air by its vast volume; it would be to reduce the religious life to nothing more than the drop which is absorbed or evaporates.

Man is a social being. On all his paths he must march in societies: but on that of the Eternal and Transcendent, on which religion sets him, he must do more than march in many associations; he must form a close, indissoluble unity. Catholicity: that is the end.

For the moment I only utter this great word. We shall see its content become clear and indispensable when we have shown that from religion in general to the supernatural accepted in Christianity the demands of social feeling go on growing and must attain their maximum.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIAL CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY credits God with the design of uniting to Himself His reasonable creature by other bonds than those called for by the observable principles of his nature. He calls him to the supernatural, and this notion implies the idea of a supplement of divine action in us, a more intimate compenetration of our participated being with His, which is its source.

That is what is meant by the theological formula *the indwelling of God within us*. And as this supernatural work is above all a work of love, it is to the Spirit of love that it is attributed, and the theological formula becomes transmuted into this : the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us.

Our task here is to ascertain why, and why specially, this supernatural work takes a social form in the Christian Church.

It might be supposed that as this higher life, in virtue of its very superiority, transcends current life, and also religious life so far as its conditions are no more than human, it could not be drawn into an order of collective facts which have nothing to do with its essence.

But this reasoning is useless. Whatever comes to us, were it even God Himself, must be adapted to us, espouse our nature, and become man, and hence become both visible and social.

For in the long run what can we receive, even of God, and especially of God, if it is not under the species of man? We cannot receive God in nature. What we call His indwelling in us has been defined; it is an activity, a more complete exercise of His rôle of origin, a supplement to our creation. But this supplement is indeed compelled, if it would fit in with its environment, to take count of what there was already in us by nature.

We can only be divinised by humanising God. And God humanised is God living the human life, and human life is exterior as well as interior, social as well as individual.

Nothing but the teaching of an exaggerated intellectualism and individualism could resist such evidence.

Man is neither a pure spirit, nor a discarnate soul; he is a soul incarnate, an animated body, and because of that, born of flesh, we hold to each other by the bonds of flesh which the community of the race creates. Because of this also, we do not, considered separately, possess what our nature calls for; we see it broken in pieces, and in order to enjoy it, need to enter into collaboration.

The Scholastics define man as a reasonable animal, and they

therefore conclude that he is social by nature. Now if man is social, he will necessarily be so in all respects. To isolate the supernatural from the animal and social life would be to isolate it from man, and consequently to reduce it to nothing.

Hence we may now conclude that an exterior organisation for the service of the supernatural is a natural necessity; that even God, our nature being what it is, could not do without it, and that Catholicism, seen in this light, is not merely an *institution;* it is that greater and better thing, an organism; and if Jesus had not organised it, yet, since the Holy Spirit filled it, it would have organised itself of itself alone.

What partially happened turned out quite otherwise, as we shall have to own.

But we must grapple with this question more closely, for it leads to the most grave divergences between those who differ from us and ourselves.

On the pretext of holding to the *spirit,* Protestants have refused to recognise the necessity of a visible, hierarchical church, supposing that the religious spirit which emanated from Christ was deprived of support and of collective means; and thus they have deserved this judgement of Auguste Comte, the rather hard form of which irritates them, but the foundation whereof is true: Protestants do not know what a religion is.

They do not know what a religion is; for they imagine that it is a union of God with the *spirit* of man, when it is really a union of God with man, of man with God, and man is not only spirit.

After the example of St. Augustine, we have compared the effect of the divine supernatural action in us to an animation. Grace, says that Father, is to our soul what our soul is to our body—that is to say, it is the principle of life, but in this case of a higher life. And if our soul is incarnate, this principle of higher life in us will also be incarnated, indirectly, that is to say that it will influence all our being and will depend on all our being, in the same manner as the soul depends on the body and the body on the soul.

Accordingly, if the Spirit of God is given to us in common, for a common life, this collective *gift* made to the sons of God will be a sort of common soul for them, the soul of their soul, as St. Augustine says again. And for the same reason as in the case above, we must add: Since the human soul is incarnate, the common soul of human beings is concerned with their bodies—that is to say, it implies visibility and sociability, it demands an organisation, and not only common ideas.

Let us observe that this implies that the human soul is intended for a body: we shall see, if St. Augustine's image is just, what the supernatural finds involved in its union with humanity.

A human soul without a body would be a simile of the supernatural without the Church. Now a human soul without a body—in our present conditions, that is—what would it be? Assuredly nothing. Nothingness for itself and for others; such would be its condition. For not only would it not produce its natural effect, human life; but it would not produce any effect.

It would be able to exist; but as if in a state of death, incapable of merely making known that it existed, incapable of knowing it itself.

It can only be known that we exist by the fact that we act, and we only know it ourselves on that condition. "I think, therefore I am," said Descartes; and that is not an argument, it is an intuition of ourselves in the act which issues from us. When an act issues from us, it grazes, if we may so say, the walls of the soul, and thus causes it to vibrate and awake to itself. In inaction, in sleep for example, though that is only a relative inaction, we "lose consciousness," that is to say we are ignorant both of ourselves and of all things else, and others are able to ignore us also, inasmuch as we are inert.

Now in order to act, the soul must have a body, as our example of sleep well proves, since when the body is bound, our soul is equally enchained, and is manifest neither to others nor to itself.

Truth to tell, is it not to this necessity for an organic manifestation of our soul that we owe our temporal existence?

It has been truly said that the soul creates its body, in the sense that the principle of life which is within us seeks to unfold itself, and to that end, organising its environment, gathering up its forces and subordinating them to the evolutive idea that defines it as its principle of action, it provides itself with organs, thanks to which it can reveal its resources, become conscious of itself, expand outwardly, become conquering and fruitful, so as to continue to prolong itself even after we have succumbed.

Now, applied to the supernatural, this law will operate likewise in due proportion. If the supernatural which is diffused in humanity wishes to manifest itself in a human manner, visibly, organically and socially, if it wishes to act according to that collective unity which Protestants, like others, impute to it; if it wishes to become conquering, fruitful, or merely to be conscious of itself so far as it is communicated to man as a common soul, it must give itself a body, and therefore it must work upon its environment, organise the human mass, must attract to itself whatever assists its functions, must create and gradually differentiate definite organs which will form a living thing as a nation is a living thing; must, in a word, provide itself with all the elements of an action which is truly human as well as divine.

Human life is essentially action, visible and communicative action. Physically, growth and fruitfulness; intellectually, initiation and instruction; morally, personal progress and the apostolate; such are the rôles it has to fulfil.

All collective life, even supernatural life, if it is to be human, will be the growth of a society, and the fruitfulness of this society by the generation or quasi-generation of new members; common initiation by a supernatural authority, then instruction for the use of its new adherents; supernatural progress in the same society, in the measure in which progress is possible, and an apostolate proceeding from its unity.

There are not two laws of life. If God makes Himself man by expressing Himself collectively in us, as He is made man individually in Christ, He must submit in either case to what He has Himself established, thus only obeying Himself. Without that He too would be deprived of His human-divine effects; He also, as we saw just now of the body without a soul, would be condemned to ignore Himself so far as He is given to humanity, in the unity of a collective life.

The Divine thus given to us only becomes conscious of itself in the measure in which it is organised and acts in accordance with the unity which is imputed to it. Therefore a visible order, or a hierarchy, a gradation of functions is a primordial necessity.

Apart from that, if the scattered Spirit of God only existed in disconnected individuals, it would cease *humanly* to perceive its autonomy, and a fortiori to be able to use it after having caused it to be recognised.

In this sense, it is quite true to say that the Church, which provides a body for God in so far as He lives in the world by His Spirit, is His support, as the organised body is the support of the soul.

It was precisely this oneness of the faithful which St. Cyprian called *the body of God*. There is reciprocity and solidarity of life between these two principles, which penetrate each other and are associated in order to renew the face of the earth.

And then, lastly, this supposition that the supernatural would come to us, would exist in us without existing first in a society, is no more admissible, as we have already seen, than its ulterior consequences.

We have said, regarding society in general, that man is not only created *for* society, but that he is also, and in a more real sense, created *by* it.

We emerge from our environment, all the influences of which condition us. Far from it being we who are at liberty to form this environment, it is interior to us. Our liberties have to do with it; but they come to it too late to constitute

it, and too subordinately to judge its fundamental conditions, which on the contrary judge us.

This we say in opposition to Rousseau. We say it in the name of the most assured anthropology. Now we have just seen that anthropology has its value for the supernatural as much as for the natural, for this reason, that grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, and consequently presupposes it; that God, when He enters into man, submits to human conditions.

If it be true, then, that the Divine in us recognises itself, manifests itself, and becomes fruitful under a social form, because such is the law of man; it will also be true that the divine must be born in us by a social action.

The purely interior inspiration of Protestants is an anomaly which could only have come into existence as a reaction against authority which had become odious. Thus hatred of the police creates theories of anarchy. But from the doctrinal point of view that does not hold. Religious initiation, though it be supernatural, must come to us, like all initiation, from outside; by instruction, by influence, which must leave it open for liberty to react and to sanction when it thinks fit what it has received.

"Man is an instructed being," wrote Lacordaire. Let us make this proposition general, and say, he is an initiated being, and all initiation, for him, proceeds normally from his social environment.

It is necessary then that a human-divine environment should exist; an organisation of grace capable of infusing grace by a kind of spiritual generation, under all the forms in which for us it has to clothe itself.

It cannot be repeated too often that even the supernatural, in its functioning, must be natural; or rather *connatural,* that is, adapted, ordained, worthy of Him who *made all things with number, weight and measure,* who *disposes all things with order and sweetness.*

Besides, the very people who object to this principle are obliged to come back to it more or less in fact, for nature will not permit any flagrant and final violation. Only, as they do it with regret, they do it by halves, which is the worst way of doing things.

Protestants have rejected the Church, the Church visible and hierarchic. Now they make *churches.* And that is a contradiction in terms, since religious society must be one, as must be admitted. And it is also a fallacy, in that the spiritual, being deprived of its proper organ, provides itself with organs more or less dependent on politics, on the interests of races, of nationalities, which have no concern with it.

But they form churches nevertheless, because, without doing so, they could do nothing; because religious life as it

pleases them to conceive it, and as they do conceive it, cannot be manifested or communicated or even acknowledged otherwise than through a society.

When Luther had proved to his satisfaction that there is no need of a religious hierarchy; that the Holy Spirit enters into each man, and thereby into all; that a source of expansion, a *spiritual womb* (*spiritualis uterus*) as St. Thomas said, for the birth of souls is not required; that there is no need of this intermediary; that each man is a priest, his own priest—Luther, pressed by realities, came to declare that *however,* "for the sake of good order" it was proper to confer on some the rights of all, and that the elect of the people must exercise the ministry!

As if *good order,* thus considered, were anything else than necessity, the condition imposed on every work by the primordial constitution of humanity!

It was necessary then to arrive at this point at first, or better still never to depart from it. Ought Divine order to be founded only on chance? and in the eyes of Luther's God, would not necessary human order, *good order,* be part of right?

The incoherence of such an attitude is plain.

Protestants did not want churches; but the nature of things imposed churches on them. Only, since they did not want them, they have made churches which are not churches. We know what they are worth for the preservation of true doctrine and for the maintenance of spiritual unity.

The history of their variations is not finished; but its curve indicates well enough that it will one day, under penalty of complete ruin, have to repair its beginnings by an honest admission. Either religious annihilation, to which liberal Protestantism is fast making its way, or else unity, by absorption into the true church of Christ; such is the choice set before Protestantism.

In the meanwhile, its sects, being half-churches, and obliged, like every half-measure, to suffer thereby the double inconvenience of being and not-being, furnish a startling confirmation of our conclusions. They pay the penalty of their refusal; they set up the partial affirmation of facts, and so we get a double counter-proof. Thinking of them as well as reasoning for ourselves we are compelled to say: Even the spiritual must give itself a body; even the supernatural must clothe itself in the social form.

Let us now see how the Catholic Church arises from this necessity.

In comparing fact with right, perhaps we shall have a better knowledge of right itself, while the fact, if it be proved, will henceforth present itself to us with greater authority, freed from the obscurities which all sorts of objectors would like to uphold.

CHAPTER VII

THE CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

WE have described our call to the supernatural as a supplement of creation; as a *re-creation,* or as is most often said *regeneration.* These traditional words express one same notion of the divine action in us.

Now for a re-creation to be harmonious, it must, as we have said, take place on the plan of the former creation, and must respect that creation, so as to tally with it. As, then, God did not choose to create and rule each man immediately; as He placed the family at the base of society and a first man at the base of the family; so he has placed the Church at the base of human religious relations, and Jesus Christ at the base of the Church.

The idea of the Man-God, the Head of religious humanity constituted as a society, thus becomes quite natural.

Let us understand what we mean by natural; for we are dealing with the supernatural pure and simple.

But I say that these notions fit in well together; that our sanctified humanity will proceed normally, and in that sense naturally, from an ancestor in whom resides the plenitude of what it is called to receive, and that God, who does things divinely, can, without astonishing us overmuch, dream of uniting Himself to this Head of the sanctified race sufficiently to penetrate to the centre of what constitutes our personality, so that it may be said: Religious humanity is divine in its Head, in order that it may be made the more divine in its members; the chain which binds it to God has for its first link an intermediary who is at the same time both man and God, in order that the attachment may be firm; in order that religion, which consists in this bond between man and God, may attain its maximum, and that by unity in Christ we may deserve that the words of the Psalm should be applied to us: *Ye are Gods. Ego dixi, dii estis.*

The Incarnation is nothing else than the adoption of humanity, represented by one of its members, into the unity of God, in such a way that the religious bond becomes, in this unique case, a substantial bond, and that accordingly, by fraternal solidarity with the chosen of God, the whole race, except such of its members as refuse that union, becomes united to Him from Whom all that makes its fate flows down upon it.

Moreover, let us not understand this Incarnation in a fashion which would render it unacceptable to intelligence;

as a kind of descent of God to earth from the ethereal regions. This idea, wherewith simple souls are satisfied, and which our fathers, even such as were learned, did not doubt at all, even though they were not committed to it, would to-day disturb those minds which are aware what a little thing the earth is, who have realised the immensity of the heavens and the unfolding of the starry realms for which science has been responsible. But it is no question of that.

The Incarnation implies nothing more than a new relation between humanity in one of its members and the Creator. And this "new alliance" is singular in that, in Christ, it is substantial. But it manifests no new thing in God, least of all a spatial displacement, nor does it claim our reverent respect for geocentric fallacies.

Let us look from within. God does not specially dwell anywhere in space. He has nothing to do with magnitudes great or small. He produces them and they are relative to Him without His being able to be affected by them.

God is everywhere, in everything, intimately and ceaselessly creating. Wherever His action is needed, He is, and already was. He was there to give being; He will be there to give better being. And if it be well that one of us should be, as it were, torn out of himself and assumed into Him, in order that at this point of humanity the whole race might touch its God, as a circle touches at one point of its circumference the infinite tangent; there is no need of motion in space for that. Divine omnipresence will simply be manifested just there at its maximum. What the pantheists say of everything, we shall say of one sole Being, and could scandal arise from our confessing that Christ is God when so many great men, from Anaximenes to Spinoza and Vacherot, have said that All is God?

"When human nature," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "was conjoined to God by the Mystery of the Incarnation, all the streams of natural goodness, as if reversing their flow, came back to their principle. This God, who had poured out the goods of nature, seeing them return through the assumption of human nature into Himself, caused henceforth all the torrents of His graces to rain on men, not only as God, but as God and Man. For *of His fulness have we all received, grace for grace.*"[1]

This passage introduces a new idea, namely, that man, when assumed into God, draws with him all the rest of the things that make up his natural environment, which are an extension of man, man in his lower nature, something like the nutritive bath into which the infant is plunged at birth and in which it finds its nourishment. So that it is the human universe as well as humanity that the Incarnation divinises,

[1] Prologue to the third book of the *Sentences*.

and religion extends through us to it as it extends through Christ to us.

Whatever may be the case as to this idea, to which we must several times return, the Man-God is, in the Christian system, the starting-point of true religion.

Placed on the confines of two domains which have to be bound together, like the magnetic needle which points to heaven though it is fastened to earth, He gives us God and He gives us to God. Come in the fulness of the times, as St. Paul says, after agelong preparations, He gathers together in His heart all the religious effort of the world, and inasmuch as He is God, He is the substantial reply to this immense aspiration.

Humanity was seeking God everywhere; she found Him one day in herself. This God, who had always enveloped her with an influence which though active was as yet too partial and never recognised, had pierced the partition at one point; He had broken through into the human mass, and by the personal deification of one of us was preparing to effect our collective divinisation.

"God was made man in order that man might be made God," wrote a Father of the Church. Our elevation to the supernatural flows from the supernatural work *par excellence* called the *grace of union.*

If the Spirit of God, shed by grace in each of us, is a kind of soul of our soul, and the same Spirit scattered in humanity plays as it were the part of a collective soul, it was fitting that this soul should be manifested first, in its fulness, in the Head of the great body, that is, the Saviour. "Christ is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is its Soul," wrote Leo XIII., after St. Augustine.

The basic thought beneath these similes remains quite clear. The head is the part of the body where the principle of life in us is revealed in the most immediate and powerful fashion; vital action seems to start from there. So spiritual life which has for its principle the Holy Spirit is revealed in its fulness in the Saviour, and then, by derivation, in the organised society of His "members."

The baptism of Christ is reckoned by Christian tradition to be the outward starting-point of this investiture. In the symbolic dove, the figure of the Spirit; in the opening of the heavens and the voice that was heard proclaiming the divine pleasure, the apostles saw as it were the solemn signs of a consecration. *He was consecrated,* says St. Peter, *by the Holy Spirit and the power* of God. This is the official beginning of the evangelic ministry and the cradle of the Church.

After that, Jesus preaches the doctrine; He constitutes an embryo hierarchy by choosing the Twelve and setting Simon

Peter at their head; He decrees social powers by solemn declarations: *Whoso heareth you heareth Me: whoso despiseth you despiseth Me. Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* To the chief, whom in advance He has called Rock (Kepha), thus comparing His work to a building, He gives the keys of the impregnable *citadel; Thou art Peter* (literally *Rock*) *and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell* (that is to say of death and of evil) *shall not prevail against it* (Matt. xvi. 13).

He dies: He reveals Himself alive again and repeats the expression of His will (Matt. xxviii. 19-20; Mark xvi. 15-18; John xx. 19-23). He *ascends to heaven,* that is to say He obtains His personal glory, the first-fruits of ours, and He *is seated at the right hand of God,* participating in His world-wide power, while the Twelve, sent to *teach and baptise* all nations, receive for this purpose a new infusion of the Spirit, Whose symbolic forms once more emphasise the social character of His work.

When the humble primitive group is at work, successively, under the pressure of circumstances and by the germinating action of the Spirit, the embryo is seen to develop, the lineaments of the hierarchy to differentiate, authority to define its claims by degrees, rites to become fixed and organised, conformably to the needs of the new life.

And there are people who endeavour to make an objection from the fact that, as we have already remarked, this comes about in part of itself, as if the Church were a work of chance. But this fact proves, on the contrary, that it is a work of life.

The living thing, also, grows of itself. Does anyone arrange its limbs in its mother's womb? There a principle of life desires to manifest itself, and can only do so in and by an organism having given characteristics.

In like manner the Holy Spirit brought into the world by Jesus can only manifest Himself in and through the Church, and He proves it by giving Himself to it, by building it up piecemeal and continuously, with no plan prearranged by any of the human beings who participate in it, and yet in such fashion that at last all men, friends or adversaries, can see that the organisation it manifests is the most powerful, the most supple, the most rich in resources, the most precise in its functions, the most adaptable to every sort of situation, the most capable both of conquest and of government, the most like to that net with fine impervious meshes to which Jesus meant to compare it when He said to Peter on the lake: *I will make you a fisher of men.*

And thus, since the divine principle introduced into the world was social, because man is social, it can attempt to

sanctify men as they are, just as the Saviour will be continued in the world as He is : God and man.

So far as the Church is visible, and composed of men, and operates in a human manner, the Church will be human ; so far as it is animated by the Spirit of Christ diffused through it, the Church will be divine.

In Christ, God is made man and a man is God : in the Church, in a participated and collective form, God is humanity and humanity God. *As My Father has sent Me, so also I send you:* this formula of mission indicates the close bond which unites these two terms ; a man made divine in Christ ; our humanity made divine in the Church.

As Jesus the individual represents the Divinity and makes it act in the form of an individual life ; so religious humanity, which through Him and through His Spirit also bears God in itself, makes it act under the form of a collective life.

Therefore individualist conceptions will be condemned, even under the attenuated form which they would have to take to have the right to call themselves Christian.

I allude to the Protestant system, according to which it would indeed have been possible to accept Christ as Head of the race, in the supernatural order ; but only in so far as each man personally clings to Him by the Gospel inwardly and spiritually.

Only after that, when they recognised that they were of one mind about Him and that this implied active adhesion, would they make a Church.

The Church would thus be the assemblage of those who adhered in the first place as individuals to the teachings and influence of Christ. As if one were to say : In order to be Frenchmen, we must first of all believe in Clovis, adhere to the traditions, even the most distant, which unite him to us, and thus become Frenchmen. Or again : to become human beings, we must first of all believe in Adam, accept the common traditions of the race, and by this means become incorporated in humanity.

" Catholicism," writes Schleiermacher, " makes the relation of the individual with Christ depend on his relation with the Church. Protestantism makes the relation of the individual with the Church depend on his relation with Christ." This is indeed quite true, and it may justifiably be enquired which of the two systems is natural to man, and if the natural is the rule even of the supernatural, as we have just agreed, which of the two is the truth.

A man wakes up in his environment. How does he become conscious of himself and of his human nature? By going back to far-off ancestors, fathers of the race, with whom he gets into touch by study? No ; by an initiation of which his

immediate and contemporary environment is the source. With the men of other times, we are only connected through those who have carried on the race, and who represent them for us, namely, the human beings of to-day.

If we take national descent in place of human descent, the case is the same.

A man is born in a country. He belongs to it before he chooses it. When he has grown up, he freely gives himself to it or refuses it, accepting or rejecting the consequences of the gift. Starting from that moment, he is a citizen, or the contrary; but this act of free will is concerned with his country as he sees it around him, in him, and only afterwards, and through it, with the founders of that country, whose work pursued across the ages has, among other contemporary facts, issued in himself.

The road by which my far-off ancestors transmitted their heritage to me is the same as that by which I can send back to them by conscious gratitude for what I owe to them.

The first man did not beget me without an intermediary; so I am not connected with him without an intermediary. The chain of tradition links us together; tradition of life coming down to me, tradition of memory going back. But the first reality for me is not Adam, it is my immediate surroundings; it is the nest in which I, fragile and solicitous bird that I am, awake on the down of family tendernesses, at the crossing of the branches of a double line, amid foliage which whispers of maternal and initiatory traditions, on the old French stock.

If we transfer this into the religious order, we shall say: The Christian is born in the womb of a religious society, which is the Church. He lives by it first of all, before he judges it and seeks its sources. It creates him spiritually, by baptism and by initiation, as the family creates him, as the fatherland creates him, before he recognises them. It communicates to him the life which is in it, life on which he reacts, for we are not passive; but whose source is there, in the vital environment emanating down the ages from Jesus Christ.

One day, when he has become capable of acting and thinking for himself, life demands that he accept or reject what he has received. If he rejects it, the Church will no longer exist for him; at least so he thinks. If he accepts it, he will keep his ties with the Church, and thereby, but only thereby, he will feel himself connected with that which the Church represents, that which it carries on through the ages, and that of which it pours out the ever-fresh influence; the Saviour, and the divine treasure which is in Him for us all.

But can we suppose that the Christian born to-day leaps over his environment to go, by means of history, to find Christ, the Apostles His contemporaries, the doctors of the primitive Church, and thus, from age to age and from link to link,

return to his environment to form a judgement of it at work in its historic antecedents?

Think how artificial and unnatural such a proceeding would be! Protestants, in reality, hold by it no more than others, because it is not possible. They do as we do, initiating their faithful and inviting them to recognise in them the continuers of Christ.

Thus it is that every recruit understands it.

Now, as that is false according to Protestant doctrine, they find themselves quite incoherent, letting life go one way, and doctrine the other. And all this because, at the start, wishing to separate, with Luther, from the Catholic centre, they had to forge a separatist thesis; a thesis which logically invites others in their turn to separate from them.

The principle which causes Protestantism to fall to pieces is there in its entirety. One may try; one may hold fast; but one holds fast in vain, one slides, and that is the revenge of the conditions of life upon those who fight against them while they submit to them.

Catholicism is much more logical and practical in its affirmations. Since it wishes to bind us to Christ in order that Christ may bind us to God, it considers that if Christ binds us to God by means of a visible humanity, and in society, because we are sensible and social beings, we must be bound to Him, Christ, Who is henceforth invisible and far off, under similar conditions and for the same motives.

Now that we have admitted the principle, we must observe all its consequences.

Our Catholic doctors have understood this quite well, and that is why many of them call the Church *a permanent Incarnation of the Son of God,* to express that it prolongs the Saviour under a sensible form and that it extends Him in the social way, in order that through the sensible and the social, which respond to our nature, we may participate in His.

God was made Man so that we might be made God. But God would not really make Himself man if He did not make Himself a society, and man would not be made God, if it were not with His attachments and by their means, and consequently under a social form. Here all holds together, and one cannot move a stone without ruining everything.

It will be well, since we wish to keep everything, to see how far everything rests on this first supposition : in the first place, the marks of the Church, and then her claims and her life.

The Church is an organized society in which Christ, thru the Holy Ghost and sanctifying grace, unites God and man, gives God to man — unites man to God.

BOOK II

THE GENERAL CHARACTERS OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

THE essence of a being is always the source of all its characters, be they permanent or in course of development. The oak's shape, its density, its longevity, and the various functions of its life, are only the unfolding of the germ hidden in the mysterious acorn buried beneath the earth.

So the divine and human essence of the Church—its character of being the social embodiment of Christ, of giving God to man by the Holy Spirit in the form of man as being a member of Society, and of uniting man to God by the same Spirit in the same form and with an eye to the same destinies—this essence of the Church explains everything.

In the first place, it explains its Unity.

By this is meant that property of the Church in virtue of which it remains undivided in dogma, in hierarchy, in ritual, in all its essentials. A single rule of faith, a single government, a single worship, which shall be the same for all ages and in all countries as it is in each age and in each country, is the first necessity of this great body.

It will be agreed, on consideration, that the necessity of this is self-evident.

If the Church be nothing but the union of God with man and of man with God organised as a society, how could there be several Churches, or how could there be division in its bosom with respect to the very thing that brings us together?

The existence of several Churches, on this supposition, would imply either a plurality in God, or plurality in man as far as concerns his relations with God. If God is one, and man is also one in Christ so that he may be united to God, there can be only one Church. In the Church is born a new unity between God and man: that of the human-divine organism of which the Holy Spirit is the soul and of which the body is made up of all those human beings who find their agreement in it.

When Jesus departed from this world, besides leaving to His followers, as a kind of testament, an exhortation to love—that is to say, to complete unity—He also addressed to His Father, as St. John relates, this last prayer: *Father, that they*

may be one: as Thou art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.

In these words is included the whole of religion. And the union of which they speak is plainly a moral union; but the moral union is continued naturally in the social union. The necessity of this consequence, this natural expansion, has already been pointed out : and the Saviour made provision for it by organising what He called in a remarkable phrase the *Kingdom of Heaven* on earth, that is the Church, and by giving it a head.

His prayer expresses the fundamental motive of this religious unity. To be *one* among ourselves, so that we may be *one* with Christ in God—this is religion bound up with the Incarnation; it is religious unity linked to the unity of our bond, Christ, and by this means to unity with our end, God.

Christ's union with God is *personal,* by means of the Incarnation; our own union between ourselves and with Christ must be social, in so far as it is a continuation of the Incarnation.

Moreover, this sense of unity is keenly felt from the first moments of the Christian life.

Where three are, there is the Church, said Tertullian; *ubi tres, ibi Ecclesia.*

Each of those confined and local groups, isolated by the difficulty of communication, attempted to become an image of the greater unity by drawing close together around its bishop.

The existence of a single bishop in each Church, and communion with him, is indeed the most visible and immediate form of religious unity. The first centuries also insisted strongly on this. *Wherever the shepherd is,* said Ignatius of Antioch, *follow him like sheep* (Ad Philad. II., 1). *Where the bishop is there must the community be, for where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church* (Ad Smyrn. VIII., 2).

But these scattered communities felt that they were united at bottom. They were the *body of Christ,* to use St. Paul's forcible expression; they formed but *one heart and one soul.*

At the outset it was the Church of Jerusalem, the first home of the faith, that formed the link between Christians, as the mother, during the months of gestation, guards the vital unity of her offspring. After St. Peter's arrival at Rome, that city becomes the mother of the Churches.

The travels of the apostles, their relations with each other, their letters, contributed no little to foster the feeling of unity. Some of their epistles are in fact nothing but encyclicals. Their contents even more than their form indicate the primary importance of unity. *Is the body of Christ divided?* said St. Paul. *There is one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who* works *through all, who* is *in all.*

Notice the remarkable exactness of this formula. One

only Lord—that is, one only Christ, who unites in Himself by spiritual solidarity all who are ranked under His leadership; one only faith, which confirms this solidarity; one baptism, which is its sign; one God, who receives from Christ, in whom He dwells, His whole family of elect, and when thus established in unity of life with it, works through them all to fulfil His purpose, works in them all to save them; this is the whole of the Christian idea.

If such a unity were broken, truly "Christ would be divided," since He makes of Himself and His whole family of creatures one single body in God.

Moreover, heresy, which is a separation from the Church as regards doctrine, and schism, which is a separation from it as regards government, and of which each is a seed of the other, have from the commencement been regarded as great evils, and as far as those who provoked them were concerned, as great crimes.

In the course of time Catholic unity can only become more and more concentrated. An organism, such as the Church evidently is, becomes more unified as its differentiation increases and its functions multiply, provided that this differentiation comes not from without, but from its internal principle seeking to manifest itself in a richer fashion.

Man is more *one* than is the oyster or the protozoön. This is proved by the fact that the protozoön remains alive even if it be cut into pieces; but let anyone try to dissect a man! So also the Church of to-day, although much more complicated, is yet more one than that of the first centuries, because its very complexity is the result of an internal force—that of the divine principle, which wills to manifest itself ever more and more, and for that purpose makes organs for itself, but without ceasing to dominate them, and to direct them towards its own ends, all the more so the greater they grow in number and in resources.

When we glance over the whole field of Christian history we realise that in the course of time its schismatical upheavals have diminished in importance. Remember the terrible phrase in which St. Jerome described Arianism: "The world woke one day to find itself Arian." Remember the great Schism of the West, lasting thirty-nine years, during which three popes, each of whom pretended to represent unity, divided between them the allegiance of the greatest souls of the world.

In this case, it is true, the question involved was one of persons only, not of principle. None of the three wanted to make a Church by himself, but each group was inclined to say, after the example of Louis XIV., "The Church? I am the Church." This attempt was frustrated. But to-day the very attempt is impossible.

To-day the Reformation, with its schismatic character, would not be possible : the Greek schism even less so. The progress of Catholic unity is verified every time a cause of religious division manifests itself, whether from within or from without. The reaction in favour of unity shows its power among us more and more, in spite of inevitable, and sometimes even useful, divergences from it on the part of individuals.

The trial of the Separation, in France, was an excellent example of this. Some counted on a schism. But the event has shown that the time for schisms is past. The few scribblers and schemers who aimed too soon at forming "associations for public worship"—they have been forgotten. The Church maintains her unity; she has vindicated it and will be able to vindicate it in the face of quite other trials.

Then the Modernist crisis from within was even more convincing on this head. It arose from a wandering on the part of certain minds in directions which seemed legitimate : some of them indeed were so, but distinction was difficult, and prudence was necessary. Prudence was lacking, and perhaps other things too. In some cases heresy followed; in others, adventurous theories, forgetfulness of the need of maintaining the lines of communication between the men in the van and the bulk of the army on the march; of the necessary continuity between the future and the past. What followed? A crisis of fresh concentration towards unity which some people think excessive; but which in any case demonstrates that will for *oneness of life* whose progress in the Church we are remarking.

Our unity, then, remains intact. Apart from a few sad sacrifices, a few individual defections, our Church has suffered no defeat. *Of those whom Thou gavest Me have I lost none, save the son of perdition,* the Saviour said.

So will it be ever more and more. The present crisis is no new thing. It began at the Council of Trent, as the Protestants know well. The Vatican Council and the Syllabus mark its second stage. The Modernist affair is the third. We shall not see the fourth. But we know that at the end the Church will find herself with an experience the more, with more solid pledges of unity.

Humanity goes forward by stages. Social life, religious life, civil life, no less than individual life, is a succession of crises which in due course find their solution. It is by means of these that a well-constituted being, and a fortiori a divinely-constituted being, makes its progress and does its work.

Moreover, this unity of the Church, which asserted itself from the beginning and still continues to increase, is com-

patible with the richest variety in all that is not essential to the common life.

Like the plant, which makes different uses of different environments, and reveals itself in different forms while maintaining its fundamental unity and the general characters which express that unity, so the Church of the East or the West, of to-day or to-morrow, shows a capacity of adaptation which has ever been the admiration of the historian and the careful observer.

Disraeli in 1874 said in the English Parliament : " I cannot deny that the Catholic Religion is a powerful organism, and, if I may say so, the most powerful in existence to-day." The man who spoke thus was the representative of a great Empire, and a Protestant; perhaps he deserves some recognition for setting above his own religious body, above the British Empire, the greater Empire of souls.

And yet within this mighty unity no particular life is constrained, no provincial or national autonomy slighted, no liberty of theological speculation denied, no ritual peculiarity thought ill of, provided that it keeps within its proper limits.

One is much less strict about details when one is assured of maintaining the whole. Leo XIII. could allow freedom to the Eastern rites because the Vatican Council ensured unity notwithstanding; and if to-morrow some God-sent genius should incorporate the whole of contemporary knowledge with Christian theology, as did St. Thomas for his day, he will be able to do so just because the frontiers have been exactly defined between what is finally gained and unalterable on the one part, and what remains unfixed and a matter for the future on the other.

It is unnecessary to insist on the fact that our religious unity, which is founded on Jesus Christ, has for its visible medium, springing from Him, or rather present with Him, though by a mysterious presence, the Pope, in whom Jesus acts by delegation of His authority. Since he is the legitimate successor of Peter, in whom Christ willed that the unity of which He is the bond should be expressed after Him, the Pope expresses this unity on our behalf; he maintains it by gathering together all the reins into his hands, so that the sacred car may not wander into ways where it would meet with disaster.

But it will be necessary to return to this point.

I remark only that our unity, which is visible in this world, extends until it includes the other, embracing what we call by those beautiful names, *the Church militant, the Church suffering, the Church triumphant;* for clearly there is continuity between the different parts of an army or a conquering nation,

though some have already reached their goal, some lie wounded in the trenches awaiting rescue, and some are fighting far from the ramparts.

This unity across the worlds is one of the most beautiful of Christian thoughts. The name that it bears, *the communion of saints,* is a sublime phrase.

To this must be added the unity through history. For, in the first place, if those who pass from among us remain *one* with us even as they are now, yet we do not lose the remembrance of what they used to be; we live among them by means of commemorations which bring the past to life again: we travel once more in spirit over the paths of old, as by our prophecies we trace the paths of the future.

"Humanity is made up of the dead as much as and more than of the living": this positivist saying is a Christian idea too, with this difference, that for us the dead are something more than mental images. The "subjective" existence which Comte allowed them has for its basis an extra-terrestrial existence a thousand times more objective than our own, freed from the claims and limitations of matter.

But this existence in us is a reality all the same. It is through us that history has its existence; what has been is preserved in the treasure-houses of what is; what has vanished is born again, flourishes again; our homage and our imitation make it, from generation to generation, ever active and ever young. *Defunctus adhuc loquitur* can be translated in general terms: *That which is dead yet lives.* And the unity of the Church embraces it.

A man who read the Canon of the Mass without knowing anything about Peter and Paul, James and John, Bartholomew and Matthew, Linus and Clement, Cornelius and Cyprian, Cosmas and Damian, Felicitas and Perpetua, Agatha and Lucy, Agnes and Cecily, might well believe that all of them, apostles, martyrs, virgins or confessors, were living even now. And in truth they are alive, even with a temporal life, even as the world's youth is alive in actual nature; as eponymous heroes are alive as long as the society which they linked together continues to exist.

Then, too, the Christian unity with the past does not stop at those who lived our own religious life; it embraces those things which prepared for the faith and led up to it, its very obstacles, inasmuch as they have been made use of by Him who made His apostle say: "All is for the elect"; "All things belong to you"; "No man can do aught against the truth, all things labour for it." Now this means the whole of history, from the very beginnings of history.

If it has been ordained from all eternity that humanity should touch God in one point, then even from eternity this central point must see all things, ages as well as races,

directed towards it. It is as if an immense rock had fallen into "the ocean of the ages." The movement of the waves goes on in all directions; the whole sea vibrates, under the light of heaven reflected by those thousands of living mirrors, the consciences of men.

He who is to come: He who is coming: He who is come: these are Christ's three titles in relation to time, as the *Son of Man* is His name in relation to race. And these titles are connected; for His temporal names are bestowed on Him for the very reason that He is the Son of Man, since the life of man is as permanent as his multiplicity.

Lastly, the Christian unity includes the future also. For to the creative thought which is outside time, and to the redemptive thought which adapts itself to time, humanity loses to some extent its successive character. It is wholly present; the treasures of the future are joined with those of the past to make up the riches of the Saviour.

"Humanity is like a single man who endures for ever," wrote Pascal. Humanity united to Christ, then, is this single man whose life has only begun, and who after youth awaits his maturity and old age. His states are none the less his though they be as yet unrealised; his members are his members, though they are yet to come. You are already in God, brothers of the future! united to Christ with me and with those who have been before us.

This consideration overthrows certain suppositions which are thought progressive, but which are really denials of the Divine benefits, denials of the Gift which has been given us by means of the Incarnation.

Given the Incarnation, it would be ridiculous to suppose a new starting-point for religious life. Who would the prophet be who would take charge of it? Any new preacher who spoke in his own name would be nothing but an antichrist; if he spoke in the name of Christ, he could do nothing but explain or develop, and the Church is sufficient for that. The Spirit of God, in His permanent mission in the midst of us, has no other task than this.

Those who dream of successive revelations, and expect new Messiahs in the future, are behind the times; for as far as one can foresee, the choice of the future, like that of the present, will be Christianity or nothing. But in any case they make of Jesus something other than He is in reality; they see in Him the Galilean rabbi which Renan saw; they do not see the Son of Man.

Moreover, in the unity of the Church must be included also, after a fashion, this material world, which humanity possesses not only as the stage whereon its destiny is to be worked out, but also as its associate and partner.

To distinguish ourselves from the world is not an illusion, as some think; but for us to think ourselves in complete discontinuity with it would be one. We say that our soul is incarnate; what is our flesh, then, but a fragment of the universe which we assimilate and bring into substantial unity with our being; without its ceasing, as concerns its functions, to form part of that great whole from which we borrow it without severing its connection therewith?

Nature lives in us as we in her. What we do not assimilate we attempt to master, by casting around us on all sides, like the *retiarius* of old, the net of thought in which we catch more or less of reality to be overcome.

By our intelligent effort we incorporate the world with ourselves; that is to say, what is in vital synthesis with us. And what our own power cannot attain for ourselves, God's power attains and subordinates to us. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet,* says the Psalm, speaking to Jehovah of His rational creation. *All is for the elect,* we must say concerning this also.

The evolutions of the earth also make part of human history, whether we suppose life to have been elaborated little by little and to have been evolved by invisible degrees up to man, or whether we imagine him to have arisen, soul and body, from the creative hands, but after a long elaboration of the natural environment which is his habitation, which fosters his existence and works with him.

So, forming by the Church's means one unity among ourselves, we introduce into this unity what is embodied with ourselves and is directed to the same ends. Matter becomes a *Kingdom of God* in the Christian sense as it is a *Kingdom of God* from the spiritual point of view. And in the same way as we have said that the *one* Church is religious humanity in so far as it adheres to God through Christ, so also must we say that the One Church is the world in as far as it subserves the designs of love which God has conceived, and whereof Christ is the universal medium.

By putting together, in conclusion, these two points of view, the unity of history and the unity of the world in their relation to the sanctified life, we come to understand that our unity has for its limit in space and time the realisation of St. Paul's dream, *All submitted to the elect, and the elect to Christ, and Christ to God.* Sublime unity, which ensures to the use of the sons of God scattered through the world and through history, all that is sought for by the universal effort, all which the philosopher Kant calls in an abstract but typical phrase *the kingdom of ends!*

CHAPTER II

THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

IN the second place we say that the Church is holy.

We must make no mistake as to the meaning of this statement. That the Church is holy does not mean that all of us who compose her are holy! Neither does it mean that her heads, those who in a human sense rule over her destinies, are holy. Those of them who are so would be more distressed than anyone at seeing this mark of the Church thus understood.

Moreover, we must not forget—and if we were tempted to do so, our enemies would be there to remind us—that at some unhappy moments even our religious heads, even the supreme Head, have been far from being all that their office demanded. This has been so in the past and will be so again in the future: although some abuses have become in our days quite impossible. We can no longer imagine an Alexander VI. on the Pontifical throne!

All the same, as regards individuals we can never be too modest. But this is no question of persons. We are considering our Church in herself, and since our Church, thanks to the Spirit of Christ who works in her, is a synthesis of the divine and human in a society, what can this compound be but holy and sanctifying, seeing that it contains God in itself, and dispenses His influences in all the forms required by this interrelated life which it sets before humanity?

The continuity of the Church with Christ and with God: the one surpassingly holy, the other Holiness itself, imparts to the Church a sacred character in spite of the failings of her members.

And thus there is already a twofold sense in which we may understand this phrase, *the Holy Church;* the Church is holy in her essence; she is holy moreover in her end.

In St. Paul we find this sentence, addressed to the Church of the Thessalonians: *This is the will of God, your sanctification.*

Let us use this term in a broader sense to denote others than heroes; but all the same the Church's ideal of holiness is no common one. Our sanctifying Spirit is not the *God of good fellows.* We have to aim at perfection, at what the judgement of the Apostolic See consecrates in those whom we call *saints,* using the word as an official title. We may be quite sure that everyone will not attain to this. But it is to this that the effort of the society tends, as it is the ideal of an army to raise up military heroes; as it is the ideal of art to create a masterpiece.

In the case of the mass of people this ideal must be content with a partial realisation. In the organism, the soul which carries the ideal within it does not penetrate all the parts of the vehicle to an equal degree. Such is the activity of our brains that it has been stated, no doubt with some exaggeration, that the cerebral substance of the thinker in the act of creation becomes entirely renewed in less than an hour. But the rest of the body, the muscular tissue for example, and even more the bony structure, does not share in this vertiginous movement. As the river flows at the centre and sleeps in shady hollows along its banks, so is the tide of life, the current of holiness in the Church.

The effort of the religious society is always directed to this. Those who say that its ends are different either deceive themselves, or have an interest in being mistaken, or in any case cannot distinguish between the individual end followed by such and such a man, and the end of the institution. The latter has no other object but the sanctification of men, the task whereof life eternal must be the achievement, of which virtue is the outline.

In our Church, which is a moral building, all the stones, all the living matter which form part of her, ought to strive to realise the idea of the plan. Every organ in this living thing should allow itself to be penetrated by the directive idea. Every constituent of this work of art, Christianity—and we ourselves are the constituents—ought to be subordinated to the ideal. And this ideal, this plan, this directive idea is that we may be, as St. Paul says of Christ Himself, *in the form of God.*

Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect—that is the ideal of the Gospel. Not that there is any question of escaping from our own nature in order to assume another; but we must do our part as men even as God does His as God, and since, through grace, we participate in a measure in His life, we, even we, must attain to be divine creatures, espousing God's points of view, God's intentions, in order that we, after our plan and according to our degree, may do the works of God.

The Church, then, is holy in her end as well as in her being. She is moreover holy in her methods, for which reason we may call her *sanctifying.* Seeing that she contains the Spirit in herself, and distributes the Spirit by means of her teaching, her worship, her government, her counsels, the mere fact that she exists must urge her adepts into the ways of the Spirit, where they may find assistance to realise their purpose.

We say assistance, not assured or necessary results. For this action of the Church is addressed to a subject which

has the power of refusal. It does not, then, lie within the power of the Church's essential sanctity, nor even of her active sanctity, to communicate itself to all her members.

That it may be able to do this depends on each of us. Each of us can hold in check, so far as he himself is concerned, the holiness of the Church in as much as it consists in an extension of his own value. She will be fundamentally neither less holy nor less sanctifying, since her God does not forsake her : since her Christ is always living and united to her : *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*

We may agree, however, that humanity being what it is, composed of evil and negligent men on the one hand, but on the other of great souls and souls of good will; if there were not, in the Church of the Saviour, visible fruits of her internal sanctity and of her sanctifying action, such an abnormal situation would give us good reason to doubt her. *The tree is known by its fruits,* says our Gospel.

But we need not fear lest this maxim should recoil against her who uses it. However far she may be from sanctifying herself in her relative success, and ambitious of the absolute, she can yet show, to whoever asks for saints, a glorious company. Her apostles, her martyrs, her virgins, her bold confessors of the faith, her heroic missionaries, her faithful among the faithful form a crown which every other religious body might envy, and of which none has the most distant equivalent.

Find the equal of St. Bernard, of St. Thomas Aquinas, of a St. Vincent de Paul, of a St. Teresa, of a St. Catherine of Siena ! Compare the Protestant minister, whom we respect, and who is not without communication with the Church through what he holds in common with her; compare him, as he passes with his wife and children, sincerely desirous of preaching Christ, but also, doubtless rightly, of considering his person, his establishment, his future; compare him with those missionaries whose enthusiasm has about it some tinge of the superhuman : whose stories have enchanted so many souls; compare him to that good father, the counterpart of many others, who wrote calmly to a colleague : " I have found the best way of developing my mission and doing my work; I have found none better than my death."

If the society which the Church has formed—and here I no longer distinguish between the various Christian confessions, because socially considered they proceed from identical traditions—be collectively considered, it will be remarked that this society, as a whole, has other virtues than the society which it succeeded, or than that which exists around it.

If, compared to the ideal, and to those we call saints who live by it, we are only pagans, yet compared to the pagans,

or to non-Christian religious bodies, whatever they be, we are saints. The Gospel has moulded us; even when we give ourselves up to evil, we keep within us that interior stratum of good which is called remorse. Our countries, our families, our friendly associations are established—with numerous exceptions, I agree—on principles which bear the mark of the Spirit which dwells in the Church.

We must not exaggerate our evils. Immense though they be, they leave far behind the description which St. Paul has left us, in the Epistle to the Romans, of the world in which he lived.

Now we cannot believe that there is any other cause for this than the leaven of the Gospel; that is to say that immanent sanctity which works in us, and in spite of our resistance urges the world in its paths, drawing from our malice some little goodness, from our wretchedness some little of the ideal.

That is what is called progress; it is the living Gospel; it is Christ working even in those who withstand Him; it is the Spirit striving, though it be by using what is in opposition to it, to renew—with how much pain !—the face of the earth.

Morally, our Christ, and His Church with Him, will always have good reason to say what He boldly said to His own, *Without Me you can do nothing.* When an attempt is made to laicise this or that in the domain of morals, either it gets killed, or we borrow for life's sake the very things we reject, namely, traditions that continue to watch over man, bents given to the soul by the Church, environmental influences still impregnated through and through with what Renan, in a famous phrase, called "the perfume of the broken vase." Broken ! He spoke for himself and for his set.

"We live by the shadow of a shadow," he added; "By what will man live after our days?" To this discouraged question of the sceptic, we reply boldly: We shall always live by Christ: we shall live by His Church, better known, better adapted to new tasks, better penetrated by the divine Spirit which slowly but perseveringly pierces the veil of our unconsciousness, and though always present, can yet only manifest itself *from day to day, from brightness to brightness,* as the Apostle says.

The truth is that the Church, Holy Church, which we see best in the past, which seems to be suffering in the present, and which for that reason has, we think, little assurance of the future, is hardly beginning her work. She has hardly disentangled her material, or displayed her means of action. What are twenty centuries of work, to found a civilisation from elements barbarous on one side, rotten on the other? We are not at the end of the world. To the Church, as to God, *a thousand years are as one day and one day as a*

thousand years. The Spirit of God incarnate and socialised in the Church has all the life of our planet before it. It will know how to do its work there, and although we have said that it depends on man, in whom the Spirit works, that the task of the Spirit should be fulfilled, yet let us not fear a check which would suppose either a supernatural malice on the part of men or a refusal of mercy on the part of Him who said *My mercy is greater than thy sin, O Israel.*

"I believe," wrote Ozanam, "in the progress of the Christian ages: I am not afraid of the disasters and errors which interrupt it. The cool nights which succeed the hot days do not prevent summer from following its course and ripening its fruits."[1]

[1] *La civilisation chrétienne au Ve siècle*, t. I, 1re leçon.

CHAPTER III

THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

WE add another gem to the Church's crown. Besides being One and Holy, it is also, we say, Catholic, that is, Universal, adapted to the whole of humanity, and therefore free in every domain from everything that limits or restrains its action, from all that implies particularism.

The root of the word Catholic is the Greek adverb *καθόλου*, which signifies *in general,* so as to include all instances beside the one under consideration, after removing all limiting peculiarities.

Now we must understand that in this sense our Church is and must be ever more and more Catholic.

Called as it is to live by God and the influences of God; united to Christ, the universal Man; occupied in urging our life towards its ultimate end, which is common to all of us; employing means which ignore what distinguishes us from each other, and go straight to what is fundamentally shared by all men to make it follow a common rule: it is not easy to see how the Church, if it live according to its law, can tend to particularism.

It is by right universal. Its framework is all ready to receive humanity in its entirety, to envelop all the manifestations of its life. It is the vocation of all human beings to enter there, in such sort that if they do not enter, and that through their own fault, but by reason of exterior or interior circumstances which do not include good will, then they belong to it, their hearts belong to it, though they have denials on their lips and blasphemies in their mouths.

Humanity organised in God through Christ—and that is what we believe our Church to be—is, then, Catholic by definition; catholic in extent, all races forming part of it either as adherents or candidates; catholic in duration, the ages having no other mission, to our human eyes and for us, than to permit our humanity to realise itself to the full: catholic in depth, in so far as the human elements which arouse in us particularisms, be they national, racial, sexual, intellectual, political, economic or social, without forgetting the particularism of the *ego,* the source of individualism—these elements, I say, will be set aside for religion to become exclusively concerned about its end, which is to unite to God, the Father of all, and to Christ, the Son of Man, humanity and its members considered in their unity, that is to say in their depth, where there is no reason and no excuse for any tendencies to particularism.

Let us dwell a little on this notion of catholicity, because it

gives opportunity for much prevarication, and if misunderstood may become a very dangerous intellectual stumbling-block.

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When we cast a glance at the map of the world, our Church's pretension to universality seems singularly contradicted by the facts. Two hundred and seventy millions of Catholics—a respectable number—are found overwhelmed, one against eight, in the human sea which rolls over the surface of the globe, from East to West, made up of sixteen hundred millions of souls.

Let not our adversaries be in too great a hurry to triumph over us on that account, and do not let us be downhearted. The world is not ended, it is beginning; and besides, the thing that matters in a mass destined to ferment into life is not the number of apparently strange elements; it is the germ.

A germ is nothing as far as its quantity goes; but in quality it is everything. It has a universal potentiality in relation to the material which is subject to it. It may fail of its result; an accident may happen; its material may show abnormal resistance; but none the less, considered in itself and in relation to a well-disposed material, it is absolute in potentiality. A spermatozoon organises the whole animal. An atom of yeast is enough for any vatful. From a grain of wheat one can in time sow the whole world. Thus, firstly Christ, then the little band of apostles, and lastly the Church have the power to conquer the moral world, to give it a religious organisation and to lead it to its superhuman destinies.

By these comparisons we only recall the beautiful comparisons of the Gospel: *The Kingdom of heaven* on earth *is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. The kingdom is like a grain of mustard-seed,* which becomes a tree spreading throughout the world.

The seed which Christ planted in the world is not one of those ferments which is contented with reducing its material, or that has for its purpose only to provoke a fermentation partial and strictly limited; it addresses itself to the whole human lump and aspires to leaven it wholly. But it does this on condition that it is willing to become leavened, for its material is endowed with free will; and on condition that it passes through its proper stages, and submits to the infinitely diverse conditions which every universal work must undergo.

Hence it is clear that the character of universality attributed to the Church can never be judged merely by the actual area which it has succeeded in conquering. If it be considered at its commencement, it has no area; the germ is alone, in the midst of its as yet unaffected material. But is its power

therefore the less? Is this a reason for refusing to it, if its internal quality postulates it, a universal importance which belongs to it as a potentiality, not as an accomplished fact?

If we look forward to the last state of religion in the world, even then it is not its accomplishment alone that will evaluate it, since the inadequacy which may be attributed to it by reason of the checks it has experienced may be nothing more than the inadequacy of the individuals or groups who ought freely to lend themselves to its action. *When the Son of Man cometh,* said the Saviour, *think ye that He will find faith on the earth?*

If religion be considered at one of its historical epochs between these two extremes, to-day for example, an extension might rightly be demanded from it in proportion to the power that it ascribes to itself, to its value for the satisfaction of the religious aspirations of mankind; but proportioned also to the length of time during which it has existed, to the historical circumstances through which it has passed, to the good will of those who ought to collaborate in its action, in a word to all the human conditions affecting the divine germ which we say is endowed in itself with a universal fulness.

Catholic universality at any epoch does not consist, then, in the number of the Church's adherents, individuals or peoples. The question of number, said the ancient philosophers, belongs to the material side : it tells us nothing, proves nothing. The smallest midge is worth more than a mountain of sand. What does matter is the organisation, the Idea. What matters in this case is the active idea brought into the world by the Gospel, incarnated in Christ, the living ferment of the human mass : incarnate after Christ in what represents Him, prolongs Him, permits Him to act; to wit, the catholic organisation.

Catholicity is properly, at its start, a question of *organisation,* using this word in its scientific sense. Our religious organism has wherewith to satisfy the religious needs of all peoples, all races, all degrees of civilisation; it can respond to all states of life, all the legitimate dispositions of minds, hearts, individuals, groups. Not that each of its states is entirely adapted to each of these things; but it is always adaptable, without ceasing to be itself, without compromise, which is as much as to say that it is a universal key for souls, a universal means for peoples, of which they may make use in order to turn to advantage genuine religious feeling and to attain its ends.

All this is not shown at all on the map !

However, the map has its part to play in the matter. For if it was not its part to help us to emphasise the Church's power of universal adaptation, yet by it we are brought back,

so that we may judge of it, to the analysis of that seed which the Saviour Himself declared to be wrapped in mystery. *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,* He said.

If anyone wished, by analysing a seed, to acquaint himself with the nature of the plant which could arise from it, he would not attain very reliable results. In the same way the man who would have wished to prejudge at the Cenacle what the Twelve were to accomplish in the world, would certainly have been deceived. We need experience in order to judge of the value of a seed, whether in the moral or physical world. When one does not recognise a seed, what does one do? One sows it: the plant which arises from it will be its witness. Moreover, it will not be necessary to wait for a complete development; that may be prevented by accidental circumstances; but the mere fact that the grain has budded, that it has budded in this place or that, that it has taken on such an appearance, is adapted to such circumstances, suffices to prove its value.

Now, supplied with this rule, let us look at our Catholic Church.

We have called it universal in this sense, that in the first place it excludes all particularisms of race and people. That this has been proved no one can reasonably dispute. Its beginning, which seemed tainted with Judaism, because it was born of the Synagogue like the tree which raises itself to heaven in continuity with the rock; its very beginning marks the enlarged direction which it will take. Under the energetic impulsion of Paul, with the confession and under the somewhat timid direction of Peter, it shoots out branches in every direction; it distinguishes *neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian,* declaring that *Christ is all and in all* (Col. iii. 11). That was a revolution of incalculable moment, in a religious world which had so far envisaged the temporal and the spiritual, the religion and the nation as bound by an indissoluble bond.

It was at the meeting at Jerusalem, the first of the Councils, that this point of the future was decided upon. Because *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,* as our apostles boldly saio, it was here that the body of the Church was set in motion, and leaving the Jewish path, which led only to the national citadel called the Temple, it takes the road of the human race, destined to encamp under heaven everywhere where there should be souls to unite to Christ, groups to bring into the indefinitely enlarged framework of a family of immortals.

Has not our Church since then realised this mission of

evangelising the world without troubling its temporal relations, and with due respect for its national classifications?

Our missionaries sometimes regret that they are regarded, in the mission field or at home, as mere national emissaries, draped in a flag, dear or glorious it may be, when the standard that wraps them round is simply the sign of the Cross.

It is but natural that a French missionary should do good to France in the place where he sojourns; his heart cannot but display its content of love for and pride in that far-away mother whom he can never leave without a groan. But he is not for all that a missionary of France; he is a missionary of the Gospel, and the Gospel is addressed to *every creature*. He asks no one to affiliate himself to a race or a people, and, in fact, those who live his life do not cease to live lives which are politically most diverse. Men of all colours and countries are represented there. This is the first mark of universality, of effective catholicity.

In the second place, our Church's action knows nothing of particularisms of sect. Sects philosophic, political, economic have often tried to engross its action. When they do not seek this, it happens that circumstances appear to invite it, as if there were no safety for religious thought except on condition of its accommodating its steps now to Plato, now to Aristotle, now to Descartes, now to Auguste Comte; now to the partisans of kingship by divine right, now to the democratic republic complacently identified with the Gospel; now to the conservative spirit, now to a mystical Socialism which thinks itself the outcome of the Sermon on the Mount. All this our Church combats. It uses all doctrines, all tendencies, all values assimilable to its life; but like the food which when once assimilated finds itself truly *made similar,* that is to say, loses its autonomy and re-enters into the vital law; so, at the start of the Church, Israelite feeling, Greek thought, Roman organisation; later, a crowd of additions of the intellectual order or practice have been incorporated with Catholic life without the initial germ suffering any loss, satisfied with being nourished, with being ever more enriched, in the same essence.

In the case of the heretic, or the feeble Christian who succumbs to science, sentiment or politics, it is the food which has the upper hand, as if a hunter were to attack an animal too powerful for him, and to be devoured by what he ought to have made his own food. But the authentic faith remains stable, all serves her, nothing absorbs her; she respects all things on condition that she is herself respected in her turn. If she has any preference, it is because doctrines and practices, though they may be legitimate, are not of equal value. Those which offer her more guarantees are wisely counselled

by her, and even imposed on those who depend directly on her action. But that is relative. Speaking absolutely, the Church only rejects what is evidently incompatible with her religious deposit, and she imposes nothing but religion itself.

By reason of these oscillations which make the march of a great body a sinuous line, it is possible, at certain epochs, to incline in this direction or that, and to seem to commit oneself. What living thing follows out its destiny like a bomb? Life is hardly like that. But this I say, that an avowed and continuing committal to any form of systematic thought, to any form of government, whatever it may be, to an exclusive economic system, is not to be met with in the Church. St. Augustine was a convinced Platonist; St. Thomas a militant Aristotelian; Fénelon a Cartesian; Malebranche had a philosophy of his own, and all of them, intellectually as well as practically, professed the same Christianity.

At the same time, our Church has lived at peace with kingdoms, empires and republics; she has striven with kingdoms, empires and republics; and this is a proof that her struggles and her agreements proceed not from any exclusiveness, but relate to what passes beyond the transitory forms of national groupings in order to concern itself with what is properly the law of mankind.

In the same way also, Catholicism has lived respectfully and patiently under very diverse economic régimes. It was born in an age of slavery; it did not invoke curses on it, it did better, causing it to melt away before the fire of its reforming influence. It followed with tranquil step an agelong evolution which emanated from itself, as a motor-car follows the light which its own lamps cast before it. It is ready to push its march further, and even Socialism, in certain respects, would not terrify it, if Socialism, ceasing to be a false doctrine of life, a rebellion against the natural relations of men, and above all a refusal of God, that is to say an inverted religion, consented to confine itself to its object, social economy.

What is to be said then about particularisms of caste? Is the Church for the great as it is for the small? for the small as for the great? Both reproaches are addressed to her at the same time; a proof of the vanity of such criticisms, as far at least as concerns her doctrine itself and the general flow of her life. Individual deviations may be disregarded.

It has been said of Christianity that it is a religion of beggars, and it has been said that it dines at the manor-house. Now whether one likes it or not, both these things are true; as it is true of our Saviour that though He was born in a stable and thronged by shepherds, He yet received the visit of the kings, dined with the Pharisee, presided at the wedding-feast at Cana; and moreover ate the half of the

fish on the bank of the lake, crouching near the fire, under the pale morning sky of Galilee which covered none others near Him but the earnest group of *fishers of men.*

Is it wished that the Church should belong to one social category only? that it should preach in an abusive sense: Woe to the rich! or in a sense both abusive and odious, Woe to the losers in the battle of life? The Nietzschean doctrines are not far removed from this last sentiment; a false democracy tends towards the other. But the Gospel escapes this fallacious dilemma.

Woe to the rich, whatever one may think of it, is a curse for no one; there, in the mouth of the Saviour, it is a cry of pity, for it signifies: Poor rich men! unhappy rich men! who escape with so much difficulty the fascinations of life, the abuses of power!

As for the humble, they too are the beloved of the Gospel, and our Church, in every age, has done enough for them, and still does enough for no one to be able to say that she despises them.

The truth is that she says with St. Paul: *I am a debtor to all.* Rich, poor, great, small have a place in her care. Her saints are Benedict Labre and St. Louis or Henry of Germany, the shepherdess Geneviève and the queen St. Elisabeth. She says that great and little, possessors and proletarians, are not from the religious point of view to consider themselves placed at opposite poles of life; in Christ they lead a common life, since they are preparing for the same future by means which are at bottom identical; since their feelings can and should be raised above objective differences; since they, the poor, may say: *Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom;* the rich, *Possess as those who possess not; for the figure of this world passes away.*

We need not insist on this; no one can deny it. Those who are irritated are so only as regards the real or supposed abuses which they observe. Let us grant the abuses, and demand in return to be allowed to say: The Church, in its authorised teaching, in its action as a whole, favours neither great nor small; it makes itself all things to all men.

Shall we add that the Church, considered as a whole again, ignores the particularism of the sexes? People have spoken in every sense of its way of treating woman. We are not going to enter into the multitude of questions that arise upon this subject. It suffices to recall the saying which sets forth the foundation of the whole matter: In the religious sense *there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free,* NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE: *for you are all one in Jesus Christ.*

Antiquity did not express itself thus. It accorded to woman only a secondary destiny, grafted on that of her partner. All its institutions, religious or other, its customs, its feelings,

unless they were corrected by love, which oversteps all barriers, all these declared : Man exists; woman coexists; man is man; woman is only man through him, as the objects of which he makes use, as the animal which he tames, as the slaves which he makes to submit to him.

It is Christianity which has driven this feeling from the world. It is the Catholic Church which has checked its return everywhere where heresy or renascent paganism threatened in woman the dignity of human personality. The Virgin Mother, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, is only the mystic expression, realised in a person, of Catholic thought about woman.

Associated with man in all his rôles, even the redemptive rôle, woman is religiously on a footing of perfect equality with him. The differences are of the practical order and concern the division of human labour. No intentional exclusivism makes a breach, in regard of woman and to her detriment, in the enveloping universality of the Church.

Let us finish the list by again denouncing the most particularist of all particularisms, that of the *ego,* the father of individualist religions. This egoism is antithetic to the Church in such wise that if it followed its logic to the end by reducing human beings as regards religion to the state of amorphous dust, it would be her exact contrary. Church means Assembly. Universal or Catholic Church, then, means universal assembly; it is the exact contrary of individualism.

We have made it plain enough that Protestantism has consecrated this separation, and that it is therefore, of all religions, the most anticatholic. To make its Church, it includes only this group of three persons; God, or the Holy Spirit : " Christ " : and each one of us. The rest, the so-called Churches which the sects have formed in spite of everything, are, when compared with the real one, only side-gatherings, which do not result from the original nature of the religious bond itself.

That amounts to saying that there are as many Churches as men. It amounts to saying that there is no Church, if by Church one means a society of men united to Christ in order to lead a really common life in God.

With this we connect the state of mind of those of our contemporaries who, in their character as partisans of ill-understood rights of man, seek to immure religion in the individual conscience. " Think what you like," they tell us : " do what you like, but in private : social life must be conducted on lay principles."

On a close scrutiny there would be seen in this conception and in our Church's diametrically opposed conception a most fecund source of conflicts, between those who mean to rule

their social life as citizens for themselves, and a religious group which claims to be a *perfect society,* that is to say one that is autonomous. Nothing is more hostile to true religion, especially when it is *catholic,* than this religious abandonment, which throws back the individual into exclusively temporal groups, tearing limb from limb what we have called the Body of Christ.

Catholicity such as we have defined it, as a *property* which is revealed in what it actually does, thus affording what theologians call a *note* (a *notable* thing, from *notum facere*), Catholicity, I say, seems thus indispensable in its negative form.

It remains to show positively the aptitude of the Church to assimilate the world to itself, that is to say first of all to conquer it, if it consents, and then to govern it. Except that, on this last point, it is no longer a question of writing a special chapter, but it will be necessary to requisition the whole of our further studies.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUERING CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

THE comparison which has served us all along from the start in our enquiry into Catholicism will again be useful to throw light on the present matter.

The Church is a living thing. Now the living thing is endowed with a power of assimilation which enables it to overcome its environment, in order to incorporate it with the unity of its own substance. This power, indeed, is implicated in life itself. What does not assimilate does not live. What ceases to assimilate perishes as a living thing, and by the dispersal of its elements and mortification becomes dead matter once more.

Our Church, which is living, assimilates, conquers, increases by the absorption of individuals and peoples who permit themselves to be enveloped by the law of life which is in her.

As is always the case with living things, it is at the start that this power of assimilation meets with its greatest triumphs. The conquests of the Apostles, those of the first Christian centuries, are like the eager life of the child, which grows more in one year than it will grow later on in ten.

In its first days, the small newborn organism is composed of a minimum of elements; the Twelve, having around them the *disciples* properly so called and a few more or less staunch adherents. It shows a minimum of organisation; a chief and eleven equals are at first the whole of its hierarchy. It is destitute of what is apparently needed for working upon the environment to be assimilated, which is impervious to all plans of propaganda, to all the blandishments of men.

But it contains a Spirit in itself; it is peopled with visions and incentives as wide as man's universe, as high as the Divinity which has broken its way into the earth. Visions which seek souls restless and eager, minds to occupy, hearts to be caught in. They will be able to find them. The inspiration which stirs within this superhuman living thing has the power to stir the world.

Our Apostles go their way, with no noisy display, without advertisement, living the divine life on their own account, showing its fruits, preaching it with all their soul or rather with all their being, counting to attract others only on the attraction which has conquered themselves, and whose haunting presence is always within them.

Christ, who lives within them, fills them with this heavenly

power which made Him to say : *Fear not, you who will have tribulation in the world : fear not, I have overcome the world.* The Blood of the Cross, which in their chalices they distribute; the living Bread in which the grain, though ground, remains immortal, will be the food and drink of the earth. Fruitful food, multiplied seed which will spring up in harvests of peoples; drink which will make the living sheaves, in their moral ascension, grow as high as the arborescent plants of the beginnings of our globe,

When nought was small, though everything was young.

Wherever these men penetrated, representing the Spirit which had become immanent in the world, the world around them yielded; it abandoned a part of what was joyously cut off from it, to let the new organism assimilate it.

And this grew without destroying anything. To develop, it did not require the destruction of any temporal institutions and organisations. It aspired to change their soul, which would react afterwards on the body; but for the moment it was content to be formed of adherents allowed their own law in things temporal, yet subject to the higher laws of the new life.

As in the first instance, when it appeared unreported in the cave of Bethlehem, the Kingdom of God came into this world without being noticed. It did not interrupt the course of things; it was the seed which falls from the hands of the early sower : it rolled, obscure seed that it was, under the feet of the heedless passers-by, under the feet of the Cæsars.

When these saw it putting forth its green shoots, they spurned it with their heels, furiously or carelessly. But it would have been a mistake to think that at first they attached much importance to it. In the well-ordered paths of their empire, this greenness was startling; they raked it up, they killed it; but if anyone had told them that here was the nursery for a universal forest, they would undoubtedly have replied with a look of scorn.

The Church let them smile. She progressed day by day; she passed from the narrow synagogue, where the Apostles usually went down on their rounds of preaching, to the enclosure, already morally enlarged, of the free catacombs. Thence she passed to the throne, and beside it, and above it, and also below it, to where the princes of thought sit in their solitude.

Everywhere, among slaves and philosophers, she made adepts. From a group without visible cohesion she became a society, a governing and doubly conquering power : conquering inwardly, to enclose her matter more firmly and to communicate to it a richer essence of life; conquering outwardly, to enlarge her circle of influence and realise progressively the

tragic and sublime prophecy of the Master : *When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things unto Myself.*

Will this original power of expansion be afterwards extinguished? must it be extinguished one day? and shall we see our illuminating comparison recoil on us, so that the living thing which is born, grows, slackens its progress little by little, and finally wastes away and dies, will lead us to suppose that it will be thus with the Church?

Let us not think so. All comparisons are halting; there is none among the things of experience that can express fundamentally the things of the spirit. The Church is a living thing, but it is a living thing *sui generis*. For the Spirit which animates it is not one of those powers of life—like the human soul—which relate only to a limited matter, for a time, satisfied with starting it off, a living and defective thing, like the bullet with a predetermined trajectory, on the rapid adventure of life.

The vital idea called *soul* does not dominate its material vehicle enough to contend for it indefinitely with its environment, that is, against all natural activities, against nature as a whole, which means to make something else of it. We die because nature needs the matter of which we keep hold, and cannot allow us to have it always. But the matter which the Spirit of God animates, in the Church, has no other use than that which He makes of it. *All is for the elect.* There is no reason then why the Church should die. She is not obliged to die. She evolves without ceasing, like an immortal living thing. Her curve of development is not the parabola of the projectile which at a given moment touches the ground; it is the hyperbola which flies off to infinity.

If then the Church be ~~assimilated~~ to a living thing, it is needful to correct the formula. The Church is a living thing which grows and never decays. Or rather, having its crises, it decays in part here or there. But it has no old age, because eternity is within it.

Now if the Church does not die, neither does its power of assimilation.

The soul of the Church, which is the Holy Spirit, is a reservoir of inexhaustible force. It is equal in value to an infinity of conquest, for it is an infinity of power.

Higher than the soul of the world whereof the old philosophers dreamed, which enveloped all the Visible within its action, the Holy Spirit which animates the Church envelops at once both the Visible and the Invisible, what is and what is not, stretching out the possible to its widest extent, being bounded, so far as it is Himself, only by the indefinite beyond of all bounds; finding in His terrestrial effort no effective bounds except those we choose to oppose to Him, we who are

called to unite our weakness to His strength, our dulness to His inspiration.

His end, so far as He works through Christ, the universal Man, and through the Church, the organ of His continued Incarnation, is to make sons of God, in Christ, and consequently in the Church, of all men; that is, according to the phrase so often quoted in Scripture, *to renew the face of the earth*. He can do this, so far as He is concerned, without effort; He can do this, with us, if we will it, contributing the conditions of duration and of submission to the inevitable complexities of such a work.

If then a check ever occurred in the development of the Church, it would be necessary to blame men for it, who would have shown themselves either slack in the conquering work which the Spirit always suggests, or refractory against the effects of this action. Or else we should have to infer contingencies such as may always temporarily check the widest flight.

But in fact we have no need to recur to these explanations *in extremis*.

At no epoch has the vitality of the Church ceased to manifest itself by new acquisitions. She has suffered losses, like the living being whom sickness or a painful operation deprives of a limb : but she has amply repaired them.

The number of her adherents has never ceased to grow.

The power of truth that is in her; her marvellous adaptation to the laws of life that makes her the most human and practical of institutions just because she is divine; the attraction of the unlimited hopes of which she permits; the amount of desires which she satisfies, of natural aspirations for which she provides an adequate and even a superabundant goal; all this is enough to bring to her continually such beings of desire as we are.

Not that every desire implies in itself the truth of what is offered for its satisfaction; but the desire which brings men to the Church, and through her to Christ, and through Christ to God, is of the very being of man's heart, and nothing but being satisfies being : nothing nourishes a living creature and nothing quenches its desire except the food adapted to its nature; grass for the herbivorous, flesh for the carnivorous; for man, Divinity partaken of as truth and happiness.

So that, here, desire and truth meet. We only aspire to God because He is our food. If this God lives in the Church, through Christ, it is only normal, if we bring with us a soul that is healthy, upright, disengaged from the complications which may always accidentally confuse our brains, for us to recognise Him and adore Him.

This is what the Saviour meant to say to the scornful and distraught philosopher whom He found in Pilate : *I was born,*

He says, *and I am come into the world to bear witness to the truth: whosoever is a son of the truth hears My voice.*

We have only to ask why Christianity, starting out on its career like the giant sun of the Bible, does not yet merit the same praise as the star : *Nothing escapes its heat.*

But that is no great mystery, at any rate looking at the matter broadly.

On the morrow of Pentecost, under the impress of the great events which had just taken place, of the words which had been heard, urged on by the outcries of the Cross, the Twelve and their disciples of the first generations threw themselves into the work with a conquering ardour which can be recovered only rarely, and never in such a combination of circumstances.

Ordinarily a siege begins with a slow investiture and ends with an assault. Here it is the contrary. First comes the assault, because, in the moral and especially in the supernatural order, an initial manifestation is indispensable. The Epiphany preceded the hidden life.

And then, the citadel is there, at the outset of the task; Christianity is born under its walls; the formidable power of Rome, which can wipe out everything, must be overcome. Afterwards the armies will scatter and act less feverishly. The period of conquest is always followed by the period of organisation. Administrative cares, even for things spiritual, increase with the extension of accumulated riches.

Lastly, to these extremely general reasons, are added others of the psychological and historical order, which explain why everything does not continue to happen as it did at the start of Christianity.

Individual liberties become involved, just where the main thing is adhesion, conversion of the heart. And without doubt there is no reason why individual liberties, taken one by one, should be better here than there; but there are currents, there are crises of good or evil will, in successive generations. Many causes may concur to bring this about.

Now the cradle of the Gospel seems, from this point of view, to have been providentially placed in one of the most favourable of environments. All philosophies having become insolvent, and the medley of cults assembled from all points of the universe deeply rousing souls without having the means to satisfy them, spiritual powerlessness and spiritual ardour combine to *prepare the ways of the Lord,* to give an echo to the word pronounced by Jesus in the court of the temple and taken up by the Church : *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*

Later on, the situations would often be different, and two cases contrary to each other, but equally remote from the first,

would present themselves, and result in a reduction of the Church's influence.

On the one hand, the good deeds of the Church, the moral and social results of its action, would filter through into its still unconquered surroundings, and would be perpetuated in separate environments, preventing them, however paradoxical it may appear, from coming or returning to the Church.

This is paradoxical only in appearance. When a spring gushes up, it makes plants arise, and then, little by little, a forest. The forest, in its turn, retains the dampness, and more than one shrub, if it could philosophise, would think the spring useless.

We know that well! How many people say to us: I have no need of the Church; my moral life is established and sufficient without her. They do not dream that their moral life emanates from the Church by the mediation of a spiritual environment, of an atmosphere which Christianity throughout the ages has penetrated with its aroma. So that their reasoning comes to this: I can afford to despise my father, for I have come into my heritage.

Only, as such heritages get dissipated, we see our own contemporaries return to paganism, as a result of believing that undenominational Christianity will do for them without Christ. It is thus that our young Turks, our young Japanese, and perhaps our young Chinese, receiving by infiltration social qualities that in the first place sprang from the Gospel, may think they can do without it, considering it merely as a stage of development. We shall see the result. Young Turkey shows it plainly enough already.

The other case is opposite to this. It is said in the Gospel: *To him that hath shall be given.* Certain environments have not enough moral basis to be ready for the Gospel. Benumbed for ages; bent to coarse religious forms which have blunted their feeling of need, they are vessels without handles and bases, of which one knows not how to take hold.

There is indeed in each of them the fundamental desire, the natural need which we have analysed and which the Gospel ought to satisfy; but the desire is only raised up to hope and to search if it sees it to be possible, if it feels itself adapted for it, experiencing by contrast the feeling of its emptiness. It is a case of repeating the utterance to which Pascal makes the Master give voice in the *Mystery of Jesus:* "You will not seek Me if you have not already found Me."

Often, in countries approached by missionaries, the preaching of the Gospel seems strange and inassimilable because its value is too great in comparison. The souls of the élite come up to it; but the mass is refractory. One must wait. Some moral shock or some slow awakening will serve to arouse these peoples *seated in the shadow of death* and whom death

holds. For the moment they are like the frozen Russian who is not cold and does not want anyone to rub him. The order of Warsaw, the peace of the moral cemetery is one of the great enemies of the Church.

But the most powerful obstacle perhaps—and it is one that is universal, which the Church has had and still has to face in every age—is that which comes from politics.

Let us take this word in its widest sense, to signify the national or racial particularisms which are repugnant to a body which is exclusively spiritual; but which is instinctively, and as might be thought insuperably suspected of wishing to dispossess the state, of wishing to constitute a state within the state.

Among non-Christians, and also among dissident Christians, this suspicion is all the easier to form, since all, as we have seen, confound more or less completely, in teaching or in fact, the spiritual and the temporal.

The missionaries who arrive in China represent, for the mass, *foreign devils;* the Catholics of London are the *Italian Mission.* In these conditions, for those who misuse such phrases, it is not only inborn malice, which resists God; it is the very good in their souls that checks what is best in them.

Besides the fear that it will demand sacrifices, the repudiation of habits of mind, the shaking off of a long heredity, things painful enough in themselves, there are also in opposition to the faith the more than respectable sentiments of patriotism and race solidarity. Those among whom the hierarchy of values is not well established, or who are bewildered, will then of necessity be refractory. They will be separated by virtue from the source of the highest virtues.

It is impossible in these few words to exhaust an infinitely complicated question of fact: we mark certain tendencies, we suggest what kinds of obstacles arrest for so long the ample conqest which, given what the Church is, would appear to be hers by right.

The Saviour often alluded to it when He opposed that Messianic Judaism which was all imbibed from what, with the Socialist Bernstein, might be called *Catastrophism.*

A moral catastrophe, a sudden manifestation of power, an irresistible inrush of God, if one may so speak; that is what the best of the Jews expected of their Messias. The others expected only lucrative politics; not to pay tribute to Cæsar and to continue to prey upon others by usury.

Jesus opposes unceasingly to this conception that which the ways of providence require; that which is suggested by nature, also a work of God, and on which supernature is modelled.

Grandiose evolution which starts from nothing; rapid progress at certain moments and marking time or recoils at others; slow overcoming of obstacles; slow wearing away of resistance; patience, tenacity and acceptance of the limits imposed by a multitude of conditions enwound with one another, like a forest of bamboos; such are the processes of nature, and also of history, whether Christian or not.

All the parables of Jesus which relate to His work point in this direction, and all His action confirms them. When He works miracles, He intends indeed to prove His Mission; but not to exercise it as it were by a moral constraint. To bursts of splendour He opposes the invisible work of the seed in the earth; to instantaneousness, slowness; to infallibility, the relativity imposed by free will; to imminence, a far-off indefiniteness.

We can readily imagine that the *Agony,* in the Garden of Olives, consisted in part of this vision, exasperating for a soul on fire, of the millenary setbacks imposed on what He beheld as essentially entirely present, and that His acceptation of the terrifying future through which He had to pass to enter into the views of a Providence in Whose eyes *a thousand years are as one day* was included in that submissive word : *Thy will, O Father, not Mine, be done.*

The last word about all this is that *the Kingdom of God is within us,* and that *us* means not each of us singly, but all; the whole, with its inextricable insertions and interlacings.

If the world came to the truth all at once; if it came thereto only by a regular progress, that would undoubtedly be a great miracle; but the work, though thus made more divine on the one side, would be less so on the other, because it would be less wise.

And more, it would not be the work undertaken; a work for two, resting on the Incarnation. It would be God without us, instead of God with us. And so it would no longer be Religion, which is a bond between God and ourselves. It would not, above all, be true religion, since humanity would be espoused, not as it is, but garbled, on the pretence of using it; absorbed, for a supposed better success which would really be a moral check to the work.

Never mind, life is there and awaits its living food. The Spirit holds its light and heat in readiness to break forth behind the dull and non-conducting asbestos of our hearts. The Saviour stands at the door of our human soul, and knocks. We refuse or forget to open here or there; but how many are the light-dazed doors of the universe, in spite of those to which the darkness clings !

There are those who say : It is all up ! You have no more life in you. Faith is dying out; our environment is becoming

dechristianised; Christ has lost ground among the ruling classes of Europe: when He comes, to quote your own text, *shall He find faith on the earth?*

Those who speak thus mistake their own petty notions for the compass of the world, and they do not even see the growing disaffection for their negations and the marked renewal of Catholic thought around them.

Chanticleer fancied that it was he who made the sun rise; these people imagine that their denial makes the lights of heaven set. They make a few timid folk around them think so, and try to force us to do so also.

But looking further, without speaking of proofs near at hand, we perceive that the flock of Christ, in this unbelieving century, has grown with a wonderful fecundity. At least twenty millions have united their voices to those who were already chanting the eternal *Credo* throughout the world.

And it cannot be said that these are Barbarians, for whom Catholicism is a stage that has to be traversed and a relative progress destined to lead them to ours! Some peoples who enjoy a large measure of so-called actual progress, such as England and the United States, are invincibly drawn by this Catholic life which seems so dead to our doctors of anti-clericalism. There was a time when in the United States you could hardly count a hundred thousand Catholics; to-day there are fourteen millions of them. This figure is explained in part no doubt by immigration, but in part also by conversions. In a single parish of Washington, more than a hundred adults are baptised every year.

In England, the number of souls who return to the Church each year is six thousand; generally they belong to the higher classes; they are often pastors, whose religion is one with their position; who must therefore forsake all, renounce all to obey their conscience. These are not primitive people who are passing through their time of transition!

No, assuredly, the situation of the Church in the universe is not what some small minds imagine. The material universe and the universe of souls offer the Gospel enormous fields. It advances there with unequal steps, perhaps; halting sometimes, whether to organise its acquisitions or to dress a wound—divine wayfarer, always bleeding with the nails and thorns of the Cross—but never giving up the next stage; having its eyes always on the goal; counting on promises which we alone, by our inveterate malice, can render vain; knowing besides that the heart of man is not so hard, so blinded to his own interest, so perverse that there is room to despair of him.

So, knowing herself equal to the immensity of the universe, to the immensity of time and the immensity of our hearts, the Church is patient and does her work. Her tranquil ardour

seeks always to distribute the life she contains. But it is in the deeps especially that she works, being assured that a little group in whom the universal Spirit of her God thrills with influence unabated better proves her catholicity than a federation of empires would do, if there reigned in them the particularism of castes, sects, nationalities, colours or egoisms.

And besides, in one respect, the two things go together. The epochs when the Church seems to see her power of expansion lessened are generally those in which the interior life of Christians is most tepid. The epochs of conquest are those when the spirit of Christ is active within.

There is a lesson there for those who are genuinely anxious as to the future of their Church. If they wish her to be effectively *Catholic,* let them be effectively Catholics themselves.

CHAPTER V

THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

WE now come to the fourth character which it is usual to attribute to the Church.

Apostolicity: this word indicates immediately to our mind what we mean by it. To justify its use, we shall have only to appeal once more to the nature of a religious society, which, if it were not apostolic, would be nothing at all.

The Church is humanity religiously organised, under the influence of the Spirit of the Saviour, and proceeding from the latter as the supernatural Head of the race.

In this definition of the Church apostolicity is included, since, as it claims to be a life emanating from the Saviour, who plays the part of Head of the race, the Church has a value only if it is actually connected with the Saviour in uninterrupted and authentic continuity.

Now the starting-point of this continuity is the choice of the twelve Apostles, their investiture as representatives of Jesus, their solemn mission and the regular establishment of their succession, so far as authority is concerned; of their tradition, so far as the society as a whole is concerned.

It is the Twelve who establish the communication between Christ and us. They weld the chain. They are the first entirely human link. If there were a break in it, if the whole chain did not hold to the first link, then neither would it hold to the half Divine, half human keystone, Christ; neither would it hold to God.

As it does claim to hold to it, it is not surprising that the central authority among us should be called the *Apostolic See,* and that the Church as a whole should claim a note of apostolicity without which it would not be authentically that synthesis of the Divine and the human inaugurated in Christ by means of the Incarnation, and continued in us by that permanent and social incarnation called the Church.

So we can see in the Gospel what importance the Saviour manifestly attaches to the constitution of His group of disciples.

At first He had seemed to select them by chance. On the bank of the Jordan, at the moment of His baptism; by the lakeside in Galilee; at the receipt of custom at Capharnaum or under the fig-tree at Cana, He said : *Follow Me,* and they followed. Nevertheless even then He gave to each of them a name characteristic of their mission, and by this prophecy marked their place in His work in anticipation of the future.

But when He wishes definitely to establish the Apostolic college, He passes a whole night on a hilltop in prayer; in the

morning, He makes His choice and determines their respective offices. All His words mark the solemnity of His intentions. *You have not chosen Me,* He says to them, *but I have chosen you. He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me. Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Go and teach all nations, making known to them all that I have commanded you. He that shall believe and be baptised* (that is, whoever is incorporated in the new life) *shall be saved, and he that believeth not* (that is, who is not incorporated in one way or another into the life that I bring) *shall be damned.*

By these words and these deeds, to which many others were added, Jesus denotes His will to attach Himself to the world by means of the Twelve, to pass to the future over this threshold.

This noble commencement of the Christian ages, these beginnings of our collective life, filled with the living memory and the effective influence of the Saviour, are called the *apostolic times.* And that is the road through which comes to us the divine life which one day touched earth at Bethlehem.

We shall get a better understanding of what is called the *apostolic* character of the Church by a phrase which we have already borrowed from the preface to Pascal's *Traité du vide:* "Mankind is like one man who keeps on living and continually learning."

One man keeps his continuity through time. Every living being is a continuous thing which unfolds itself, through a series of states, in the unity of an organic plan which, taken by itself, is unbroken. The automatism which carries on its life is a kind of tradition derived from its begetter, and applied as far as possible to perpetuating its characters.

There is formed thus, from father to son, then in the life of the son in its various stages, and then further on still, a continuous unity which is to the multiplicity of our lives what the chain is to the beads of a continuous rosary, or, to use a finer comparison, what an idea is to its successive incarnations.

In the case of things spiritual this continuity is properly called *tradition.* When the spiritual thing concerned is the religious action of the Saviour, tradition takes a unity which human traditions show in no other case.

Every tradition is limited in extent save that which comes from the Head of the race. Since in Jesus the race of the sons of God is entirely contained as in its principle; since, by merit and by influence, He is the universal Begetter of the elect, the religious tradition which comes from Him has a universal character. Nothing can belong to God, in principle at any rate, which is not included in this tradition. He

is, as the Apostle calls Him, the new Adam, whose blood flows in our veins; whose Spirit is our breath; whose merit multiplies our values, bearing up to the infinite the nothingness that we are in ourselves; whose mediative power sets Christianity in motion from within, like the inextinguishable germ which, from the beginnings of our race, enkindles life in thousands of heads and hearts.

If we remember that Jesus is God, and that the Spirit which He imparts to us is a living and eternal Spirit, we shall realise how the continuity of the Church through time puts on a form of unity which surpasses the unity of time, which fixes the Christian life in that eternity whereof Plato said that time is only its passing image.

Through God, the Church is above time, through Christ, it comes into contact with time; and it prolongs this contact by means of the Apostles, and after them by means of the tradition through which they stretch themselves out towards the future.

To call the Church Apostolic, then, is simply to call it divine, Christian, traditional, in a word, *one,* in God, in relation to time, as we have already called it *one,* in God, in relation to space.

Apostolicity is only unity in the order of time, laying stress on the point at which the Christian line is attached to Christ, in the persons of the Twelve.

That is why the Protestants, who like ourselves are aware of the impossibility of connecting themselves with God otherwise than through Christ, and with Christ otherwise than through the Apostles, claim that it is they who are apostolic, that it is they who hold to the true tradition from which the Roman Church has turned aside.

But how are they going to justify this pretension, seeing that they are individualists, and being individualists, cannot be in continuity with anything?

Just now we will not dispute the fact that they profess the doctrine of the Apostles. If we wanted to be malicious, we might ask them: Which doctrine? They have so many of them! But that is not the question. To profess the doctrine of anyone, to profess it by oneself, to practise it on one's own sole responsibility, is not to be in social continuity with him. A society demands something more than a doctrine or a practice freely chosen in common. A society requires organisation, authority, government, and the carrying on in common under that government of the activities which represent the end of the society. In short a society is a life in common, a *symbiosis,* as a savant might say.

For the Protestant there is no symbiosis, no life in common for Christians. If such a common life is set going in

Protestant sects, it is done arbitrarily, by the constitution of groups which, according to Reformed theology, have no religious function. There is no priesthood properly so called; every man is his own priest. There are no bishops to continue the line of the Apostles. There is no Pope, the successor of Peter. Even if all these things are not discarded, they are only mimicked. How then can they speak of apostolicity in the profound and full sense which our Catholic theology implies?

The same disadvantage is always turning up, because in truth its consequences make themselves felt in every field.

To declare that each of us is attached to Christ directly, as an individual, really impelled by the Spirit, but with this Spirit acting in each person separately, with no social organ, and consequently with no continuity either in space or in time; to speak thus is clearly to suppress the religious importance of the Apostles.

Suppose that there had been a break between Christ and us; suppose that His teaching, as contained in the Gospel, were exhumed in our day from some collection of archives; a Protestant, by getting possession of the volume and reading it in the light of the Spirit, could begin his Christian life. Not so a Catholic. Why? Because the Protestant is governed by the individualist principle, and the Catholic by the social principle. Because the solitary Protestant can entrust himself to a book, and the Catholic requires a life to which he is joined, a life which the sacred book assists in nourishing, but which it cannot cause to come into being, since it has no value except in and through the Church. "I should not believe the Gospel," said St. Augustine, "were I not moved to do so by the authority of the Church."

The Protestant, exposed, as he claims, to the action of heaven, thinks that he is sufficient to himself. The Catholic only feels himself under heaven and in close relation with it if he is in the organised group which God animates, the group of which Christ is head, of which Christians of all ages are members, since this group has its unity in time as it has its unity in space, seeing that it is *One* in Him who belongs to all times, Christ; one, through Christ, with Him who rules over and unifies all times, God.

As My Father has sent Me, so also I send you, said the Saviour. As His own mission prolongs God to us by an Incarnation which makes one unity of God and man; so the mission of the Apostles prolongs Christ to us, as well as God who is joined to Him, making one unity, in God and in Jesus, between all the human beings of all ages.

That is what apostolicity is. Luther and Calvin understood nothing of this; they broke the chain. Their God is an

individualist God. Their Christ is a far-off person, to whom they are bound only by a book. And in these conditions their apostles are nothing to them but Protestants before Protestantism, isolated from each other, isolated from us, who are ourselves isolated. This is their substitute for the great common life which in the Catholic conception enfolds all times and places in its wide embrace.

The eternal person of Pascal, transposed into the supernatural, is a thought of deeper import than the thought of the Reformers.

To reform in this fashion, to reform a life by suppressing it, by reducing its elements to the state of inconsistent scraps, is a strange reformation !

The Protestants have reformed like the branch which, discontent with its tree, violently tears itself away and scatters all its leaves on the ground. A better method would have been to strengthen the sap in the branch and to work on the whole tree by exposing the docile bough to the influences of heaven. All the world would have profited by a deep reform brought about after this fashion. That of Luther impoverished the Christian tree and slew the branch which did not fear to incur the sentence of the Master : *The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.*

But here let us leave our unhappily separated brethren. Let us realise for ourselves the wonderful union which God establishes between the grapes of the whole bunch, thanks to the sap which runs through the sacred vine, by the Twelve, whom He has grafted into it, and communicating to us thy nourishing essences, O divine soil, loving and ineffable Ceres who bearest men and their harvests; who nourishest their life with the food of truth and love; who givest them all things, distributing only down the ages, as a higher gift, the growth of that Gift which is Thyself.

If it is true, as Spencer[1] wrote, that " Ecclesiasticism represents the principle of social continuity," that it consecrates " the authority of the dead over the living," that it " sanctifies the authority of the past over the present " ; and that consequently one of its functions is to " preserve the organised product of primitive experiences against the changing effects of the experiences of the present," we can see what religious value Apostolicity expresses for us. It is the authority of the great dead, the symbolic judges of the twelve tribes of Israel; and through them it is the authority of the greatest of the Dead; He who lives again, but remains invisible; and through those holy dead, it is the authority of the immortal Living One, communicated to us according to the laws of

[1] *Principles of Sociology*, p. 130.

visibility, of sociability, and hence, too, of continuity which we ought to see in it.

Thanks to these chosen men, who came forth from the high dwelling-place of Mount Sion to conquer the world and the ages, God is with us, holding fast through Christ to the whole of humanity.

All that God possesses is ours; what the past has received is close to us.

By this continuity, which makes us as it were the contemporaries of the Apostles, the Apostles, and through them all the good things of which they were the depositaries, are the contemporaries of all times.

CHAPTER VI

THE "ROMAN" CHURCH

THE note of Apostolicity is further defined by another. We say: The One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and *Roman* Church.

This Roman character of the Church is that for which it is most bitterly reproached by some. We shall have to say why this is so; but before discussing the mark, let us understand it.

The Roman Church means: The Church united to the Apostles, of whom the Head was Peter, Bishop of Rome; and she therefore has as her head through the ages the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

There is no mystery about this. It is a question of tracing back Apostolicity to its centre. Is it not necessary, in order truly to connect our religious association with the primitive group which acted as the embryo of the Church, to attach it to that primitive group's centre of unity, represented by Simon Peter?

At no moment of its existence has the Church been an anarchy. It is true that at its beginnings we do not find an organisation such as we see before our eyes to-day; but it was there in rough outline. An outline does not mean the same thing in little, as some people fancy—as if we ought to find in the primitive Church everything on a smaller scale, the Cardinalate, the Congregation of the Index, a pontifical power as defined as ours. To such views as these, quite unscientific, as must be admitted, and very manifestly contradicted by history, we are by no means bound. We do not find in an acorn tiny branches bedecked with tiny leaves and supported by a tiny trunk. The organic urge of a living being is not a simple unfolding. Anaxagoras thought that it was, but science believes it no longer.

What there was in the Primitive Church was a *primitive* church, that is, a seed endowed with an active tendency to become what we see before our eyes to-day. A seed defined in itself, possessing its own characters and a beginning of organisation, so that the existing order might arise from it by a concourse of circumstances which would bear the same relation to the primitive seed as the earth and the air to the plant.

In the embryo Church what was it then which represented the central authority that is the bond of our Church to-day? It was the primacy of Simon Peter: it was his particular situation in relation to the Twelve and to the disciples who were joined to them in the Saviour's name. *Feed My sheep: feed My lambs,* Jesus had said to him by the lakeside, when,

after His resurrection and about to leave His own, He assigned to them their places in His scheme. And all tradition has understood this to mean : Be the shepherd of the shepherds, as well as of the flock.

Moreover, a word of the first importance, clearer even than this, had been spoken some months before at Cesarea Philippi. After Peter had solemnly confessed Christ, replying for the Twelve as their natural and inspired mouthpiece, Jesus had responded to his declaration thus : *And I say unto thee that Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

To speak thus was not to found the Church upon a pun, as some derisive critics pretend. It was the renewal of a prophecy already contained in the symbolic name which had been given to this Apostle at the moment of his calling. *Thou shalt be called Peter,* or *Rock,* meant even then : Thou shalt be the foundation of My work.

We must insist now on the continuance of this rôle, which Protestants want to consider as a personal one, and which, according to the words of Jesus, shows itself to be as durable as the Church itself, which will endure as long as men dwell on the earth : *Thou art the rock, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

What is said here as to the eternal continuance of the Church is said only to emphasise the eternal continuance of the office attributed to Peter.

As the foundation of the house endures as long as the house itself, so Peter will continue, in himself or in his successors, in his function, we may say, the foundation of this Church, against which the gates of hell will not be able to prevail, and that for this very reason—namely, the solid foundation which God gives it. As long as Peter is there, the Church will be there; as long as his part is played, the Church will remain firmly established, and reciprocally as long as the Church subsists, it will be supported by the Rock which is its first common stratum.

On the very morrow of the Saviour's death, Peter inaugurates his rôle of spiritual founder; he confirms his brethren's faith in the resurrection of Jesus, the starting-point of life in him throughout the ages to come.

According to Paul and Luke, he is the first who adheres to the mysterious life of the Saviour and who communicates to the others faith in this fundamental dogma. In this symbolic fact the Fathers of the Church saw the first effect of the primacy which was to mark its character more and more clearly until the Vatican Council defined it in a final formula.

Now betwixt this primacy and the Roman character of our Church there is only the stoutness of a solitary fact, and truly

a fact of such importance that the world's future was changed thereby and that keen disputes have been instituted in our time for and against its reality and its signification. That fact is the coming of St. Peter to Rome.

By coming to Rome, either a short time before his death or twenty-five years earlier, as has long been believed; by fixing there, in any case, his official seat, Peter gives to this office its future claimants. The heredity, which cannot be *personal* in this case, will be real, in the juridical sense of the term; it will be attached to the seat. The Bishop of Rome will be the legitimate successor of Peter, as the son of a king is the legitimate successor of the king. And in this wise the continuity of the Church's government will be ensured by the continuity of succession of the Bishops of Rome.

It is not therefore necessary that the Popes should live at Rome. The fact that Rome is the point of departure of this successive continuation would suffice, even though Rome were wrested from our Pontiffs, even though it were destroyed, to enable our Church to be called *Roman,* which means, once more, *Petrine,* that is, Apostolic by antonomasis, and so authentically Christian, divine.

It is in this sense that the Fathers of old said: Where Peter is, there is the Church; *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia.* This means: Where the centre is, there is the circle; where the central authority is, there is the society.

It cannot fail to be noticed, even after the passing of long centuries, how providential was the choice of Rome as the centre of Catholicity, as the origin of the whole movement of conquest and of organisation, extension and concentration of the universal Church.

Jerusalem, that Oriental town of the world's religious past, was the starting-point of the sacred initiative, it was not its centre. In the east the sun dawns; but it is in the south at mid-day that the continuance of the daylight, the regular distribution of brightness, the power of shining upon all things, and the ordering of life on the earth become plain.

Rome is the full south of the Christian sun.

What Rome was for the world, a centre, that Peter was for the Church; and as *Urbs,* the City *par excellence,* beamed over the world and addressed the proclamations of its masters *Urbi et Orbi;* so would the Church do in spiritual things.

The opportunity would arise; it did arise, and it is thanks thereto that Rome is still Rome; but it is equally thanks thereto that the Church, humanly speaking, is the Church. Not that Catholicism could not have been established otherwise, or elsewhere; but God is not in the habit of passing over the instruments that His providence has prepared in order to make use of others. The work of temporal civilisa-

tion and that of religion find their meeting-place in Him; He aids them by means of each other.

In that sense it is quite true to say that the conquest of Rome by the Church has been for her the road of the future, the most powerful means of universality and of concentration into one.

On the other hand, if Rome still exercises to-day that miraculous attraction which makes of her not the Italian *città,* but a world-city profiting by the universal consensus of attraction and admiration, to what is that due?

The great conquered cities of history, Memphis, Thebes, Nineveh, Babylon, Athens even, have perished or atropied. Thanks to the evangelic Rock, Rome rose ever higher. She mounted to the world of the Spirit and remains there. The sceptre of the Cross has been of more profit to her than her eagles. She had by her arms conquered the shores of the Mediterranean, admirable and fertile, but after all narrow; by the Spirit she conquered the distant world, she entered into communication with the Worlds. And what she had lost in the first coalition of peoples against her, when she has transposed it into the spiritual, she confides to eternity.

There is in this an application of the axiom that Grace does not destroy Nature, but completes it. God crowned human effort anterior to Christ and the civilisation that was its fruit by making the capital of the civilised world the capital of Christendom, and hence a former of the future.[1]

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It is certain that at the beginning of its Roman life, the Apostolic institution showed scarcely any signs of the primacy so strongly asserted to-day. The bond between the Bishop of Rome and the first shepherds of the churches was very loose.

We have already stated the general reason of this; the embryo is not the man. There are also particular reasons into which we cannot enter here. The apostolic régime gave to each of those who had been in personal contact with Jesus, who had heard His words, a sort of universal rôle analogous to that of Jesus Himself. A church which had one of the Twelve at its head felt itself secure from any deviation. To have recourse to Rome, a thing difficult in those times, did not seem indispensable. And yet we find numerous traces of it, but they are comparatively slight, as was to be expected.

And this régime lasted some time longer in the case of the immediate successors, who naturally profited by the habits that had been acquired, and also incurred the handicap that we have pointed out.

[1] If we remember Pascal's three orders of greatness, we may see in ancient Rome the *greatness of the flesh*, in Athens the *greatness of the mind*, and in Christian Rome the *greatness of charity*.

It is hardly until the fourth[1] century that the power of Rome is clearly exercised. The power of the other bishops then becomes more special to their own churches, more local; that of the Bishop of Rome becomes proportionally universalised, in order to satisfy the new needs of a growing unity and of a complexity of functions which requires a stronger centralisation.

It was at the Vatican Council that the situation of the Papacy was established on its definitive basis. The dissentients had protested for a long time. They were right; for this was the last blow dealt at the particularism whereof they had constituted themselves champions.

Of course they never understood the matter in that light. It was Rome that triumphed, and Rome was an Italian town. They pretended that it meant the triumph of an Italian faction. As a sample of strict reasoning, this is a capital sorites.

In London Anglicans call the Catholic body the *Italian mission*. The people who speak thus are the same that used to call Edward VII., and who to-day call George V. an *apostolic* sovereign. Those who have Anglicanised the *universal* Church reproach us with having Italianised it, and the same was said by those who acted in like manner, those who wished to Germanise the Church, to Gallicise it, in short, to divest it of its own character in order to absorb or to destroy it.

At the bottom of their hearts, all these folk, assuming they are sincere, must feel the operation of that particularist spirit which they reproach the Church with desiring to consecrate, just when she is casting it aside. Far from the exaltation of Rome having Italianised religion, it has worked its greater universalisation, by leading back to the ocean, where Peter's ship sails, the streams which flow so sluggishly through their national plains.

It cannot be denied that abuses have existed. Some flatterers may have sent up to Rome an incense of doubtful quality. Some Italianising camarillas, buzzing like gadflies around the Holy See, have tried to compromise it, and have sometimes managed to succeed in spite of it. Or again, a more honourable failing, some excellent souls, in the enthusiasm of a victory for unity that was rightly considered most valuable, have used its effects to excess; like the child, who, after discovering the purpose of some object, makes use of it continually and abuses it. All this is human. But would it be equitable, would it be serious to judge a secular institution from its petty details?

If we raise the level of the argument, as is fitting in a

[1] In our days this is the date practically decided on, after the critics had tried to put it back by several centuries.

matter of such import, we must agree that Ultramontanism, as it has been called, when crossing the mountains to bear its spiritual homage to Rome, frees itself, simply and definitively, from religious nationalism, a pagan conception, in order to cleave to that unitive universalism which is the foundation of Christian thought, by recognising the common father.

And Providence, as if it had desired this comment to be underlined, permitted that the moment when spiritual Rome triumphed should be also the moment when political Rome escaped from the domination of the Popes.

Mark well what we say. We do not make excuses for the spoilers; and we do not forget that the present situation of the Holy See, in protest and without accepted juridical status, is as untenable as that of the Church in France. But we do say that, providentially, this political spoliation of the Holy See, coinciding with its exaltation at the Vatican Council, helps to emphasise the exclusively spiritual character of the Roman Primacy, and thereby the universal, and not Italian, sense that must be accorded to it.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

IS the Church's Apostolicity, with its Roman character, in directing our attention towards the past, going to prevent us from thinking of her future and from ascribing progress to her?

That would be a great mistake.

Our Church is progressive precisely because she is Apostolic. If it be true that, looking from our standpoint back to the Apostles, she seems to come to us, then, considered from theirs and looking towards us, she seems to go forward; and to imagine her journeying thus through time like a cart loaded with unchangeable luggage would be to ignore her nature and to deny that note of apostolicity which we have represented as the real growth of a *seed.*

The kingdom of heaven on earth *is like unto leaven* meant to raise all the dough. *It is like a grain of mustard-seed* which becomes a tree; these are the comparisons of our Saviour Himself. *So is the Kingdom of God,* He said, *as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up while he knoweth not. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, then he putteth in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe* (Mark iv. 26-29).

The image is a clear one. The sower is God, and God does not change, but the seed changes. It does not change in nature, the grain of wheat or the fruit-stone does not become an acorn; but first a green shoot, then a feeble plant, then a bush, then a tree, in the manner and to the extent that its essence allows.

We must then study this evolutionary character, no less essential to the Church than its Apostolicity, which is its other side.

As to the tradition from the Old Law to the New, from the preparations of Judaism to the blossoming of Christianity, St. Thomas Aquinas refers to that disposition of Providence which conducts all things little by little (*quodam temporali successionis ordine*) from imperfection to perfection, as it does ourselves from childhood to maturity.[1] He means thus to recall the saying of St. Paul: *The* (Jewish) *law was our pedagogue in Christ* (Gal. iii.).

Truth to tell, the contrary of what we mean might be

[1] *Prima Secundæ*, Q. CVI., 3.

inferred from this remark, namely, that Judaism was imperfect, but that Christianity is perfect, that it has been so from the start, and that consequently there is no scope for requiring an evolution in the Church in the sense of a greater unfolding of truth, of the better adaptation of institutions to their ends, of a fuller achievement of Christianity individual and social, under all the forms that human life animated by the Spirit of God permits.

In fact, the same St. Thomas, continuing the Pauline comparison of the child and the man, declares that the youth of religion, like the youth of man, is the time of its richest manifestations, and that the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, those who were nearest to the Saviour, were more profoundly Christian than we are or than men will be after us.

In regard to the conquering character of the Church, we have said something of this sort already. Pascal laid stress on it when in his preface to the *Traité du vide* he expressed himself with so much force on the one hand against those who dare not invent anything new in physics : on the other, against " the insolence of those foolhardy folks who produce novelties in theology."

This was the thought also of Bossuet, in his argument against the variations of Protestantism, when he said : " The truth that comes from God has perfection at its commencement." He might have added, like Pascal : The forms of life that come forth from God have their perfection at their commencement; religion, in all that it is, has its perfection at its commencement, since it comes from God, who is Perfection itself.

We have no wish to set up our own opinion against that of such minds as these, nor to slight that notion of fixity which has been seen to be so necessary. But in this matter there are ambiguities to clear up, and to shrink from them is to run a risk which, for all that it is less serious than the first, in theory, may no less be mortal.

What is Religion?—It is a relation between man and God. This sole generic definition ought to show us that religion is fixed on one side and in evolution on the other. It is fixed inasmuch as it comes from God and relates to God. It is also fixed inasmuch as it binds to God that foundation of humanity in us which does not change, which is identical in the savage and the civilised man, the black, the white or the yellow man, the man of yesterday and the man of to-day, the instructed and the ignorant, the wife and her husband, and in short in whoever participates in what we call *human nature*.

And as this is the principle of religion, its fundamental and specific character, we may say, in short : Religion does not change; it is perfect from the start.

As soon as revelation was completed—and we believe that it was completed in the Cenacle—the cycle of religious progress, properly so called, is closed; henceforth there is only room for the *utilisation* of religion, and this utilisation will be progressive or otherwise according as free individuals or peoples wish it to be so.

But the truth is not exhausted by this point of view. It is the main point, no doubt; but the main point, although the main point, is not everything. Indeed, what is accessory in itself may in certain circumstances become principal in its turn. As if we were to say: It is accessory to travel on foot or in a vehicle, provided that one makes one's journey; but if I have robbers behind me, I look for a motor-car. So, the question of religious progress, accessory in itself in relation to the one thing necessary, has become to-day for many a question of life or death. Is it not necessary for us to face it?

Let us repeat then that the divine point of view of religion and its unchangeable humanity do not exhaust every consideration relative to it.

If God is unchangeable in all respects, and if man is unchangeable in something, namely, in his fundamental constitution, which is precisely that whereby he touches God; yet man is changeable also in other respects, and these are not unrelated to the former. There is continuity and interdependence between what changes, in us, and what remains. That is exactly why progress, badly conducted, can bring with it the ruin of the faith, and the faith, misunderstood, can become the enemy of progress.

So long as our knowledge, our moral feelings and our methods of action evolve constantly, under the pressure of the interior and exterior happenings which make up our collective life, can it be supposed that the religious life, whereof we have already said that it assimilates everything to itself in order to give all things their direction, will not itself submit to evolution, as every living thing evolves by reason of the conditions imposed on its development by a variable environment?

Our permanent comparison throws light on this case as it does on the others. The Church, immense living creature that it is, makes up its life in human fashion of what it assimilates or abandons.

There is something fixed in it, namely, its essential vital idea, if we may thus express it; its dogma, its hierarchy, its worship in their fundamental and independent aspects, and consequently in regard of all temporal circumstances. In this is the part of the Holy Spirit who is given to us; in this is the spiritual leaven which, when incorporated in mankind, wills to renew in us and through us the face of the earth.

But if there is thus something fixed, there is also something transient and perpetually renewable in the Church's life, and that is the human element which all through the centuries puts itself at the service of this life which is incorporated with it for the moment, but has no more right to fix it in one of its stages than the food our body assimilates to-day has to arrest the vital current which flows always, identical under all its incessant transformations.

We must understand, then, that this word *perfection,* as applied to the Church, does not bear the same meaning as the word perfection applied to God, even though God is in the Church. God is wholly God, and the word perfection as applied to Him is therefore taken absolutely, without restriction or possible ambiguity. But God with us, in the Church, is no longer God alone, but also us, so that the perfection of this human-divine compound is a relative perfection, a perfection which grows, although it does so around fixed points.

What do we mean, at bottom, when we say that the Catholic religion, whose organ the Church is, is a perfect religion? In speaking thus it is our intention to oppose the Catholic religion to the non-Christian religions on the one side, to heretical and schismatical deviations on the other. We claim that before the Catholic Church or beside her, although there were religious values, a thing we certainly do not deny, they were only imperfect, incomplete, as if we called a man an imperfect man because he lacked a limb.

All religions saving ours lack some essential thing. Either they are ignorant of God, like the pagan religions, or they are ignorant of man, like Protestantism, which makes an individual of him when in reality he is a society; or they are ignorant of the real relation between God and man, like Buddhism, which desires to unite us to God by suppressing ourselves. And so of the others.

Catholicism is a perfect religion in this sense, that it has seen all that has to be seen, taken into account all that has to be taken into account in the fundamental constitution of man and the general direction of his life.

The synthesis of God and man, which is the goal of religion, Catholicism realises to a perfect extent, inasmuch as the coincidence is established between all that is man in relation to God and all that is God in relation to man, considering the latter always fundamentally.

But who does not see how much scope that leaves for progress, and far from being opposed to it, makes an appeal to it? In the sense in which we use the word, a well-made child is also a perfect man; a well-organised society is a perfect society; an animal which is fitted for all the functions of its species is a *perfect animal.* Does it follow from this that

the child has not to grow, the society to progress, the animal to develop?

The Church, issuing from an uncertain or misguided religious atmosphere; freed from the narrow synagogue in which the world's future was stifling; established by Christ in the perfection of its human-divine essence and ready to defend it against all the deviations that would tend to mutilate it; the Church, I say, must now urge itself towards the perfection of its development, which, we might say, has hardly begun, which has the ages before it, and which, after earthly trial, must attain to a state of completed perfection, since the perfection attributed to its beginnings is only a starting-point, and the perfection wherewith we say that it is endowed to-day, to-morrow, at any time, is only a stage among stages.

Let us recall what the Gospel says of the Saviour: *He increased in age and wisdom before God and man.* Does that mean that the Incarnation was only realised in Him in stages? Surely not. But His human-divine nature, perfect from the start, only bore its human fruits little by little.

Now this simile is illuminating. It is quite to the point, for the Church is Jesus Christ continued; it is the Incarnation carried on as far as ourselves under a social form.

If then Jesus grew in age and wisdom before God and man, His Church must also grow in wisdom, as well as in age, before God and man.

The social Incarnation which the Spirit of God realises in the Church is perfect in one sense, and always capable of greater perfection in another. It may always be better understood, better organised, may always act more efficiently. "We must not," as St. Thomas says, completing his thought referred to a little while back, "consider the work of the Incarnation exclusively as the term of a movement going from the imperfect to the perfect, but also as a beginning of perfection for human nature."[1]

And let us remark well that by thus expressing ourselves we are not turning towards religious evolutionism as Modernism understands it, as heretics understand it.

In what does the difference consist? It consists just in this point. Religious evolutionism consists in making religion *vary;* we on our side wish to develop it in its very essence.

Religious evolutionism introduces novelties, that is, dogmatic, ritual or governmental elements which do not proceed from the primitive germ; which are added from without, like the snowball that grows bigger as it rolls. Our idea of development, on the contrary, maintains the identity of religious dogma, rite and government with those which the primitive germ bears with it. It only witnesses the revelation

[1] *Summa Theologica*, III. pars, Q. I., art. 6 ad 2[m].

of the value which that germ contains, the incorporation of the things outside it which are assimilable to it, and by assimilable it means capable of entering into its law, of supporting its life and enriching it while leaving it itself—like food, not like a strange body or a poison.

Evidently, what is thus incorporated with the Church's life is indeed in a way a *new* thing, but it is not a *novelty* in the sense in which all our religious authorities use the term in order to oppose it. A novelty is a foreign element which remains foreign, as it is not assimilable; the new thing is an element which becomes assimilated, and which then leaves religion, enriched by it, to its own proper essence.

Now in this way we may say that Catholicism has an indefinite life before it; that this life must be a progress; a progress in dogma, in religious discipline, in morals, in everything.

When this truth is insisted on, everyone accepts it; but in practice an immense group forgets it, being desirous of remaining, on the pretext of the fixity of religion, in states of mind that have perished, subject to orders that have become oppressive, of continuing practices that have lapsed.

The least drawback of this attitude is that by thus remaining stationary in the midst of a universe on the march, we take the risk of ranging ourselves—and in the name of Christ, ironically enough—among the cripples of the army of mankind. But the greatest danger is that the souls of little faith, and a fortiori the souls without faith, may confound our position with that of the Church herself, and seeing us dragging behind through being unable to live our religion in the temporal surroundings that are imposed on us, they may come to deny that religion is an article of life; in which case we have caused God to be blasphemed, by preventing Him from making manifest in us the proof of His vivifying eternity.

A true Christian must no more be one of those who favour hanging back than one of those who rush forward so quickly that they leave the battle behind them.

With the aid of that wisdom which can hold us back from both extremes, we can avoid this twofold peril.

With our eyes fixed on the unchangeable truth, but seeking always to understand it better, to put it in relation with all things, in a word, to live it, we must be Christians of to-day and of all days, apostolic and progressive; fixed to the rock of Peter, and not refusing, by paying out more cable, to face the deep sea more and more.

Tossed about in its mists, and remembering, as in the *Légende des Siècles,*

The old iron ring on the sunlit quay,

we must be sure that we do not slight those venerable moorings by turning our eyes towards the deep. The man of progress is all the more the son of a Church that is unchangeable and yet ever in full sail; keeping and discovering the truth, faithful to one attitude, and yet in spite of all friendly to free action, and lastly, eternal through time, because she is the daughter of Him who has in His person joined eternity to time, the divine and human Mediator, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOGMATIC CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

WE have not yet finished bringing to light the fundamental characters of our Church. After dealing with its traditional notes, to avoid ambiguity, we must bring forward and justify three properties which belong to it, in the first place because it is a society; in the second because it is a *particular* society, having one definite goal to reach by working in such a way as to manifest its nature.

We propose to speak of the *dogmatic* character of the Church, of its *governmental* character and of its *ritual* or *sacramental* character. This last is so important and central that we must consecrate to it two sections of our work. The two former will also be referred to again in various connections, but we must make place for them immediately.

We will begin with dogma.

The Church has often been reproached for its dogma, as if it were an incubus on religious thought and feeling, which latter, it is pretended, has no need of being fixed in formulas which sooner or later will fall away, while religion remains; which have a statutory form, instead of that free movement which is fitting for the life of faith; which appear to set up a super-science above science itself, and, as a result of this, constantly take the risk of coming into conflict with it, whereas independence of all that is human and moral character are the first attributes of religion.

These objections, which are offered in a more or less absolute sense, come from liberal Protestantism; radical Modernism makes them its own, and others, without quite consenting to them, hold with them to a greater or less extent.

To make them ours we should have to renounce our conception of the Church as a *society;* a *spiritual* society, a *human-divine* society.

For this sole reason, that the Church is a society, and not a collection of individuals without any real bond between them, it is obliged to have dogma.

Every society has a dogma, for every society has its own laws, which are based on a certain conception of the common life, on the objects which this life has in view and on consequences which are deduced from these principles. All the grounds on which the decrees of the society are based are so many dogmas.

But it is evident that a spiritual society, such as the Church, has much more need of dogmas even than a natural society, such as a nation, seeing that the spiritual society, which is superimposed on an already existing natural society, is compelled to justify its existence by proclaiming its *raison d'être.*

But where is this *raison d'être* to be found, except in the realisation of higher ends, and consequently in things superior to judgement, either in themselves or in their relation to us? The rôle of dogma[1] is to define these ends, and the method of action they imply.

Do those who wish to see its abolition think it possible to institute a common life without conceiving or stating a reason? *He that draws nigh to God,* said St. Paul—he means through the medium of religion—*must believe that He is,* and there is the first article of the Creed—I BELIEVE IN GOD—*and that He is a rewarder,* that is the last—I BELIEVE IN LIFE EVERLASTING. Between these two will come all the rest.

Since man is a reasoning creature, no form of life can fail to assume in his regard an intellectual aspect. Those who reduce religion to a state of feeling would do well to tell us where they obtain a feeling which does not transmute itself into an idea, or which is not the outcome of an idea.

Man is one; no feeling can live in him which is not sooner or later justified. If then it be proved, as we have attempted to show, that religious life must be embodied in a collective organism, the Church, it is only necessary to add that man is a thinking being in order to conclude that religious life must be embodied in a collective organism which will think out its religion, and justify it by beliefs.

Now this thought, this justification of religious action and of collective religious feeling, is dogma.[2]

In the third place, since the Church is not merely any sort of society, not only a spiritual society in the human sense;

[1] It is not without reason that the singular is used here rather than the plural: for *the dogmas* or particular beliefs imposed by the Church are only the unfolding of its intellectual soul, if one may so say; they are the consequences of the position that the Church takes up, intellectually, in regard to the human life it has to govern. It is because the Church proposes to itself ends superior to those of our temporal activities that it is distinguished from civil societies, with which the churches of antiquity were confounded, and that dogma is distinguished from legal preambles, a thing which even Socrates has not understood.

[2] Whereby it is evident that dogma is distinguished from private belief in the same way as socialised religion is from anarchic religion, as Catholicism from Protestantism. Protestants have beliefs; they have no dogma, because belief for them has no authentic means of translating itself into law. "Orthodox" Protestantism is a contradiction of the very principle of Protestantism, as Auguste Sabatier has well shown. (*Cf. Esquisse d'une philosophie de la Religion: Qu'est-ce qu'un Dogme?*)

but more than this, a society founded on the Incarnation, and itself a continued incarnation thanks to the Spirit of Christ which lives in her, we have a new reason, firstly, for affirming the necessity of dogma anew, secondly, for characterising it by calling it *revealed,* which cuts short every idea of variation, and consequently replies to one of the objections we have just noted.

And this also serves to dispel all fear of veritable conflicts between dogma properly understood and true science, seeing that on this hypothesis science and dogma have a common source. Do they not both proceed from the Eternal Truth, manifested in the one case by the Incarnate Word, and in the other by the human word, which is also the son of the Truth?

If, then, God is with us through the Incarnation, and if this benefit, once accorded to history, is continued to it through the Church, according to the Saviour's promise: *Lo, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world;* if the Church is only the prolongation in time and space of the divine Head of the race who is given to us; if, as one might say, it is the total and permanent reality of Christ, it is unquestionable that this presence of God in humanity must be translated into ideas, as it is into emotions, into aspirations, into new modes of action.

Already present in the heart of man under the ancient law, through the spirit of the prophets God had already infused into it thoughts which we believe were higher than human investigation could yield in regard to those religious objects which in so many ways are beyond us.

Later, *in these last days,* as St. Paul said (*novissime, diebus istis*), present in the heart of Christ and animating His manhood even unto perfect communion of lives in oneness of person, He infuses into it the knowledge of universal destinies, of universal means, and of the acts and ends which relate to them. So that the teaching of Christ, while it remains a human word, is a divine teaching; His thought is the divine thought; and this thought, received by tradition in the Church, strengthened by the new outpouring in the Cenacle, socialised, made the law of an association, naturally takes the name *dogma,* that is, belief confirmed by decree.

How could we fail to understand that if the Church represents a life issuing from that of Christ, her claim to instruct her own members is simply the claim of the organism to govern its functions, to maintain its material vehicle under the vital law, to cause the *directive idea* to rule.

The soul of the living being, the real idea of its organisation, is represented here by the teaching authority. Submission to this principle of life, then, will be life. He who refuses his submission will be then *ipso facto* ANATHEMA, that

is to say *outside:* Jesus is not continued in him, he has broken the vital link; remaining obstinately attached to his own judgement (*pertinax*) he leads the life of his choice by preferring the teaching of his choice (*hæresis*), but it is not the divine life.

The achievements of this life, then, will not be for him. The supernatural destiny which it prepares for us, and to which neither experience nor earthly science can lead us, but only the submission of our mind to the rudiments the divine Master proposes, while we wait for the evidence; this destiny in whose regard the will by itself is powerless, since to obtain it we have as it were to rise above ourselves, to overpass our conditions of life, to go forth from our original environment to take root in the divine; *In Deo radicati et fundati;* that man will have no claim to it who does not desire to be told its means and its stages.

How give to our steps this transcendent direction, unless once more, since it is a question of a superhuman goal, by a superhuman initiation, He who is one day going to reveal His secrets to us giving us the alphabet of the divine knowledge, and He who wills to impart His treasures to us giving us the key to them?

Theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge relative to divine things are then equally indispensable in this connection, and intellectual unity in dogma, that is to say in Christ and in God, throughout the Church, cannot be challenged.

One God, One Christ, One Faith, One Baptism, said St. Paul. The Fathers of the Church, too, call conversion to the faith a *return to the unity of Christ, to the unity of God.* The fact could not be put more strongly that for us the faith is a first principle; and that the teaching of the faith, or its dogma, is the ideal bond which connects and gives a direction to the elements of that *Letter of Christ* which, according to Paul, the religious soul composes.

To teach dogma, in inviting men to the faith, is then for our Church a primary rôle, that which arises before all others from her nature and from the quickened realisation that she has of it.

For her, to exist without demanding faith of those who agree to be incorporated in her society would be to exist by not existing, that is to say by refusing to recognise herself for what she is and to draw the necessary consequences from it.

* * * * *

At the beginning of the Church's life the word *dogma* was not in use. Instead of it we find *good news* (εὐαγγέλιον), *the word of God* (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), *the teaching of the Lord* (κήρυγμα), *tradition* (παράδοσις), *the deposit* (παραθήκη), *the way* (ὁδός,) etc.

Since the Church was in germ, all it involved was so

also; things, and words even more. Fully formed and obligatory doctrine had not yet clearly taken the character of a law, because the Apostolic band had not yet clearly and visibly the character of a society; it was a social embryo, with a law in embryo, and so also a dogma in embryo.

But what do words mean, and what does the developed or embryonic state of life mean? As soon as it is a life, and that a human life, it has a governing thought. If contact with God through Christ and through the Spirit of Christ communicates a new life to religious humanity, it must produce a new truth. That is an absolute necessity.

And it is also a fact; for it is not true, as has been claimed, that primitive Christianity lived without definite doctrine. If the *Apostles' Creed,* in its actual phraseology, does not go back to the Apostles, its articles go back to them; the greatest rationalists, such as Harnack, admit this to-day.

If a disciple of St. Paul were to come to life again among us; after his first astonishment at the mighty evolution of what he had known in its infancy, an astonishment that may be compared to that which we feel on coming face to face with a man of whom we have lost sight for a long time, he would recognise everything, and the identity of doctrine would be perfectly evident to him.

Make the counter-proof; read the letters of the Apostles, the Acts, the Gospels, and see if there is not the same doctrinal foundation, the same formulas of life, the same dogma.

Moreover, to be definite, it would not be difficult to show briefly that, from the most practical point of view, dogma is not the excrescence in the Church that it is said to be; but that it is a principle of life, suggesting, as thoughts do always, feelings, impulses, actions.

Take the Trinity, the most abstract of dogmas. Whoever thinks of it has already a glimpse of the divine life which the Augustines and the Thomases—and we may add the Bossuets—have been able to demonstrate as sublime. This life of Three in Unity; these reciprocal influences in fulness and in equality; these waves of the Infinite which gushes up in its own fulness, diffuses itself without going out from itself, receives itself in love; this interior richness which is manifested in the world through its triple reflection, creation, redemption, sanctification, as in the unity of man is manifested the activity of various functions; is it not, for the believer's benefit, firstly an increase of the divine transcendence, which unites what is divided and consequently also diminished, and in addition a renewed sentiment of that ineffable activity, in which God consists, as opposed to the vague God of the Pantheists and the magnified man of the Deists?

God transcendent, God living in Trinity, is moreover the road by which we may arrive at God living with us through the Incarnation.

If God were only transcendent He would be nothing to us; but because He is living in Himself, we can the better conceive that He is living also in His work; because He is active knowledge in Himself, through the Word, we can the better conceive that He knows us, and because He is love, we conceive that He loves us.

The sublime transcendence which gives God His infinite value thus resolves itself into immanence which gives Him His value *for us*. *God with us* is the Incarnate Word who instructs us. Through this survival of God in the midst of His work, and through the words He says, and the feelings He shows, and the way He takes, inviting us to follow Him, we see our lives take their place in the great current which bears them on to their true goal, after they come from Him who is the beginning and end of all, the Alpha and Omega of all things.

When we have started out from God the Creator, God the Mediator gathers us up and leads us as our Brother to God the End. Destinies made alluring, elevated, enlightened, rendered joyous, in spite of their ordeals, by the easiness with which we can support them, since He who of old was crucified makes Himself the Cyrenæan when it is we who are mounting Calvary; this is the fruit of the redemptive doctrine. Dare we say that all this serves for nothing? Let us say rather that it is the basis of everything; that the Church would no longer be the Church, if it did not bear in itself this treasure-house of divine and divinising truths.

Go and teach all nations: that is the official mission of the Church. *Baptise them,* added the Saviour, as a sign of incorporation and of fidelity to My teaching; *in the Name of the Father,* Who sent Me; *in the Name of the Son,* Whom I am; *in the Name of the Holy Ghost,* Whom I bequeath to you. Mingle thus heaven with earth, the human with the divine, the truth which changes with the truth which does not change, the immutable direction with the variations and complexities of life. *Whosoever will believe and be baptised* with this baptism, in desire or in fact, implicitly or explicitly, will be saved. *Whoso believeth not,* that is to say who refuses to believe, if it is actually and morally possible, will be condemned.

Our Saviour, in expressing Himself thus, did not think that dogma was an accessory. His society is essentially dogmatic, reposing on the *Gift of God,* which is truth, first of all, in order that in the next place it may be feeling well guided, action enlightened, and not merely instinctive, as those inno-

vators think who, without wishing to do so, lead man back to a vaguely superior animality.

The Church is a society which believes in certain things, and which because it believes in those things acts collectively, as its members act individually, in the direction of those things.

Dogma is then, for Catholicism, the principle of its unity, that is of its very existence, inasmuch as it is a body. Thereby it is the principle of its action, which it directs; the principle of the feelings which circulate in it and which are found at their highest in its saints.

Like the most fervent Christians, the most glorious of active souls are at the same time the most dogmatic, the most attached to their doctrinal bases. Such was St. Paul, who, at each moment, in his letters, passes from the most tender effusions to the most careful instructions, to return to the most firm of counsels. Such were Augustine, Jerome, all the Fathers of the Church. Such, later on, was St. Bernard, the man of fire and the unbending opponent of Abelard. Such were all the great mystics, whose flights, before they escape at undefined tangents, touch the circle and communicate with the centre.

The divine centre of our unity, the Incarnate Word tells us, is His Person, the price of the light that He is and that He gives us.

When He affirms : *I,* the substantial I, *am the Light of the world,* we cannot dispute the value of that living Light wherein He wishes us to share.

And since, under the ineffable radiance, we are in united associations, forming in this as in everything a society of brethren, we cannot but obey in mind as in heart and action the law of our association.

"A Church without dogma," a Protestant[1] has said, "would be a sterile plant." It is indeed true, if dogma is as it were a luminous sap to the plant filled with the flow of the spirit of God.

[1] A. Sabatier, *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion.*

CHAPTER IX

ON INTELLECTUAL LIBERTY IN THE CHURCH

IN our times the dogmatic character of the Church is perhaps that which has provoked against her the most bitter opposition, the loudest protests and the widest revolts.

The Church demands faith, and from all sides is heard the cry that this claim is an affront, that it is an insult to the human mind, that it stands in the way of the scholar and tends to paralyse his researches, that it abuses the ignorant man by imposing on him an arbitrary authority, that it is opposed to progress by keeping our minds in fixed forms, whereas the law of intelligence is a law of slow evolution by means of free enquiry, and lastly, that it throws away as rubbish that autonomy of thought which man's conscience more and more claims and upholds.

Now our Church, despising these clamours, or waving aside with a calm gesture the objections that are brought forward against her, justifies her claim by means of a few very clear reflections.

There could be only two reasons for the claims of the faith doing injury to the human spirit. Firstly, that the supernatural is a delusion. The man who maintains this must indeed conclude that the Faith lowers the human mind, like any other error that takes possession of it. But, on the excuse of judging the attitude of the believer and of the Church, would he claim thus to solve, *a priori,* the religious problem in a negative sense?

That would be rather premature and frivolous.

Assuming the hypothesis of the supernatural, which is that of the true believer, one must say : There are things beneath man's mind, things which it judges; and things above it, by which it is judged. Matters of faith are of this latter sort, and that is why they are binding.

But by judging man's mind, these matters magnify it, and far from debasing it, bring it up to their own level, beyond itself. " When little things cling to great things," said St. Augustine, " these greaten them."

Or else men might legitimately take offence at the claims of faith if such claims were formulated before examination, without giving free will a chance of asking for reasons. But so far is such a thought from the Church, that quite on the contrary she obliges the man who is outside her to wait for proofs before attaching himself to her.

To be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us is

the ideal which the Apostle sets forth (1 Pet. iii. 15), and a man of the fourth century, Eusebius of Cæsarea, cried out: "The insulting taunt is often made to us Christians that we cannot prove the truth of our beliefs, that we demand from those who come to us a blind submission, and we endeavour solely to persuade them that they have to believe us, without discussing or examining anything in advance, like a flock of sheep. It is a calumny that is hurled at us."[1]

Now when we speak of proofs we ought to understand what we mean. We do not mean always learned proofs, nor those "demonstrations of the Gospel" whose tenor is accessible to so few, even if they be the real motives of adhesion of those who put them forward.

The credibility of the faith can be shown in many fashions. There are philosophical proofs, historical proofs, moral proofs. There are proofs which are complete in themselves; and there are others which borrow their completeness from good will to appreciate them, or more deeply still, from grace.

For we must always remember that the religious problem is not, properly speaking, a *problem*. We have not only to discover truth, but to enter into life, alive ourselves, and steering towards this truth of life by making use not only of reasoning reason, but of moral instincts, of the deliberate confidence which can be inspired by the surroundings in which the religious truth is at work, and finally of that divine instinct which the "religious animal" feels as soon as he ceases to put obstacles in its way, learning, by wise obedience to it, to know things divine, as the bee knows the flower.

In any case we should always be able to account for our faith, and only on this condition will the Church receive its homage.

Before the Church offers herself as a teacher, she offers herself as a fact; she demands that we should discuss that fact, and she means us to be free in that discussion; she allows us to apply all the rules of a considered and prudent criticism.

"Reason precedes faith, and brings man to faith": such is the proposition of Pius IX.—the Pope of the *Syllabus*—opposed to the claims called *faithist* or *traditionalist*.

In these conditions what remains of the supposed intellectual autocracy of the Church? Free will, which is antecedent to the submission of the believer, wipes it out. There is no enslavement where there is preliminary discussion, deliberate adhesion, and only after that reliance on affirmations which now suffice because they are supported *ex hypothesi* by the evidence of authority, and their particular subject-matter deprives them of the authority of evidence.

The formula in which we usually express the principle of

[1] *Demonstratio evangelica*, init.

autonomy, *Admit as true only what binds your reason, and as obligatory only what binds your own conscience,* is fully acknowledged here, provided we are willing to understand it.

Cardinal Newman agreed to this in a picturesque, bold and rather off-hand manner, had he not been dealing with his own circle: "I drink," said he, "to conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards." It was a way of saying that doctrine, being divine, ought not to be discussed in itself; but it must be discerned, and in this discernment we apply the rule, to recognise as true and obligatory only what somehow binds our own reason and conscience.

I say *somehow,* because of what we just now were saying of the uncultivated, and of the "faith of the peasant," which is as rationally legitimate as any other.

The Church values Justin, or Augustine, or Newman, and all who come to her after long enquiries, on that account, and acknowledges their intellectual value. Those who come to her humbly, because of the confidence she inspires and merits, she receives with joy and love, and with approval, too, because she is conscious of herself and of what is in her; knowing that her Christ is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life,* and that the Spirit which dwells in her, the Church, is the very Spirit of the Saviour poured out; she knows that she can save those who trust themselves to her, that their confidence *"has reasons which* perhaps *reason itself does not know,"* and that she is on earth the hen that guards the universal brood, under the immense wing of the Cross outstretched in two directions.

* * * * *

It remains that the believer, having once made his submission, may run the risk of not seeing that free choice maintained which we have just affirmed solely as antecedent.

Freedom of belief is one thing, the freedom of the believer is another.

Let the hypothetical believer be a man of learning, or only a pretentious man, a man of "free thought"; the form of his protest may vary, but it will be fundamentally the same.

Here it is in its highest form.

The starting-point of science is doubt; its necessary accompaniment, free thought. To bind scientific research to a foregone solution is to reduce it to the search for the best method of proving a thing, and that is the science of the sophists.

Now if you ask a Catholic doctor, he will tell you that to question a datum of the faith is already to sin in one's heart, because it is to admit at the outset—a thing blameworthy in itself—that one may be led to deny the dogma, if the argument undertaken should appear to turn against it.

Before undertaking any philosophic work on the question of God, for example, the believer is bound to hold that He is in Three Persons, that He has created a world of limited duration, that He enters into definite and carefully classified relations with this world, and so on.

And as a prelude to any historical research on the question of Christ, the believer is bound to affirm His divinity, to specify His office, to recognise His work in the whole of Catholic development, and in short to consider as proved all that a sincere effort would leave in suspense, while waiting to see whether it is confirmed or condemned by the results.

And all this means being bound by prejudice; prejudice, perhaps, in the ordinary sense of the word; prejudice, in any case, in the etymological sense. For a prejudice is a judgement that is not justified, a judgement settled beforehand.

And so this is the condemnation of all sound science.

The mind of the Catholic scholar, dominated by prepossessions, advancing only along paths which are indirectly enforced on him by the fear of prohibited solutions, will be brought by the force of things and even without noticing his bias to deflect the truth, to look at only one side of things and surreptitiously to introduce elements of authority, of arbitrariness, into his so-called scientific reasoning.

The force of such an accusation must be felt. It is a factor which may drive away not only men of learning, but even more, we might say, people with scientific claims or hopes in the so-called intellectual younger generation, the minds that possess a surface knowledge of things, subscribers to semi-scientific reviews and readers of works which pretend to the popular presentation of the results of research.

Now such people as these are numerous; and we are bound to help them.

Happily, this is easy, though in such matters as these the objection is always clearer than the reply.

Firstly, let us recall this evident principle: Freedom, in all things, is not an end, but a means. We are free, in short, in order to be able to fulfil our destiny; free, in the case under discussion, in order to be able to attain truth.

This being so, let us examine the attitude of the man who studies; and is for all that a convinced believer, a man of faith at the same time as a man of science.

Such a man finds himself face to face with two orders of knowledge: on one side belief, on the other evidence or demonstration. Is one of these two orders of knowledge illegitimate? We have already said that belief is not, supposing that it has furnished the grounds of its claims, and as for evidence or demonstration, they have not to be defended against any objector.

Here, then, are two sources of truth. Can they, or can they not, agree? that, evidently, is the whole problem.

But this problem is solved in advance by this single fact, that we have said and proved that both these ways are legitimate. For what is a legitimate way, in the things of the intelligence, if not a way which can lead to the truth? And if there are two ways which lead thither, how can they be divergent?

Could error arise from a true demonstration, and falsehood proceed from duly verified authority? In no domain could this easily happen, and when dealing with religious faith it could not happen at all.

To say that religious faith is legitimate as a means of knowledge is to say that it is divine; for it has no value for those who proclaim it except what it derives from this transcendent origin.

To say, on the other hand, that the use of the reason is legitimate and necessary, is to take the same thing as understood; for reason has no authority except as far as it represents the eternal order, that is to say, God once more. How could God be divided against Himself, teaching by revelation what He contradicts by the intelligence, and setting up in opposition to each other as two manifestly hostile things on the one side the Gospel, on the other the book of Nature and of humanity, when these volumes, which we want to distinguish, are really the three volumes of one work?

If the Gospel be properly understood—the living Gospel, I mean, such as the Church offers it—it cannot contradict nature, nor man, nor, consequently, that science which expresses them both.

If science is in its own domain and operates according to its law, it cannot contradict the Gospel.

If there be an apparent contradiction, the reason is one of two things: either the holy teaching has been misunderstood, or the pretended science in question is only an erroneous personal opinion, and in place of representing the universal Reason which we have just called God, it only represents a faulty personality, an instrument of the truth badly used, a prism badly cut, wherein the light deviates and disperses its waves at random.

The Truth is one; all the roads which lead to it meet, and all the roads that lead to it are marked out by God. If Faith, like science, comes from God, all their conflicts are illusory, and it is we who, by our intolerance, our lack of comprehension, our blameworthy mania for substituting everywhere our own personal points of view for the authentic truth or for the authority which preserves it, create those conflicts which our passions keep up, to the prejudice alike of religion and of science.

Now, when the matter is stated thus, what remains of the accusation advanced above? When it is said that faith impedes science, is it assumed in advance that the faith has no foundation? In that case, no doubt, faith impedes science, as every error or arbitrary prejudice is an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge. But that is begging the question, and while our opponents pretend that they are only pleading the cause of free thought, we discover once more that they are surreptitiously solving the religious question by a denial.

On the other hand, if it is granted that our faith may be founded on reason, then the plea in favour of free thought is objectless, since henceforth no one is menacing freedom. We are only forbidden—in our own name, I might say, since we have ourselves previously freely accepted the faith—to wander in bypaths and quagmires. And even then, only the deepest. For, as Leo XIII. said, "We must let men of science make mistakes." Science has need of breadth; to call it back at every false step would mean breaking its impetus, and who would lose by that but all of us, the man of faith as much as the rest?

But that is no reason for leaving mankind without a compass.

Science has shown what it can do by itself.

It heaps up its discoveries in the realm of time; but to lead us outside time, or to tell us whether time is all; whether there is anything or nothing beyond life and beyond death, beyond what is appreciable by the human senses and understanding; whether there is *Someone* above this oppressive *something* which dazzles us for a moment, sometimes enchants us, and most often pushes us on from shock to shock and in the end slays us, that is what this proud reason cannot tell us.

It stammers, wavers, contradicts itself. It says Yes, No, Perhaps, by the voice of its highest thinkers, and at the end, discouraged, can only say: What do I know?

It does not satisfy us. The faith satisfies us; and it is by satisfying us with regard to the essential that it makes us supremely free with regard to the rest.

The man who has lost his way is not free of his road. The man who feels that he is in the right path can branch out in every direction, without fearing destruction or disaster.

It is well to drive this point home for a moment, and to distinguish two cases which may occur in an enquiry.

Either the man of learning has to deal with a question of faith, or else he finds himself in the vast field of free discussion.

In the latter case, that is to say, most often, the field opens out before him without hindrance. Since every truth that is

discovered can find its place in that superior synthesis where faith and knowledge are in harmony, he has no reason to tremble; there is no reason for the religious authority to intervene. There is no more reason, therefore, for the defenders of intellectual liberty to become alarmed, unless they mean only to protest against the abuses which we have denounced ourselves.

It is not, however, necessary to figure to ourselves the Catholic scientist as a man obsessed by an anxiety to make his results accord with religion that borders on scrupulosity. For us science is no sword of Damocles; it is a sword of justice, and can wound naught but error.

Where would be our confidence in God, if, for love of the truths He reveals, we were afraid of the truths He suggests to man? Or what kind of wisdom would the Church herself exhibit, if, having it as her duty to encourage all her children, she rendered uneasy by her untimely demands those who do her most honour?

Has it not been remarked that the most sensational discoveries relative to prehistoric man have been made by priests? Discoveries, indeed, which seem, from a narrow point of view, to cause difficulties in our interpretation of the Bible.

But these priests have told themselves that truth always has its rights, and that it always makes them accord with other rights which, if looked at in the right light, are not other.

Many similar cases might be brought forward.

But if dogma is in question? Then, it is true, and it would be unfitting to equivocate about it, the progress of the man of science is limited from without by dogma.

We say from without, and express ourselves with caution, because we might say that even in this case the real liberty of science remains intact. But certainly, in face of dogma, even if science remains free, the man of science is not so. He is bound to revise his work and if necessary to deny its apparent results in the name of what he knows to be a higher light.

This is so, because such results cannot proceed, he will consider, except from an error of fact or of judgement, an error which he might discover if he could, but which may always be taken for granted, seeing that God can neither deceive nor be deceived, when He speaks directly through the faith, whereas in the case of science His truth only reaches us through the mediation of our individual mind, which is subject to error. It has none of the guarantees which we have seen to be present in the Church, by reason of the permanence of a divine Spirit within her.

Is such a solution a matter for scandal?

Science, mark well, is itself the first to apply this method

of verification at every moment. Is it not the rule, before a solution obtained by the principles of a particular science is proposed, to confront it with the truths that have been ascertained in the kindred sciences? If we add to them the sacred sciences, we arrive at the thought that surprised us.

As for the apparently paradoxical statement that even in this case real scientific liberty remains intact, that is easy to establish.

What is it that the faith says? It says that such a thing is; that therefore it is fitting for the learned man as for the ignorant to consider it as acquired. But this thing which is acquired for the man of science is not acquired for science. The latter absolutely ignores it, and, supposing that it is a question of a truth within its own domain, its business is to discover it; not in order to enable us to know that it is true, since we already know that by hypothesis; but to make it take its place in the system of ideas and facts which truly constitutes science.

Science is not a catalogue of affirmations after the manner of a creed; it is a series of antecedents and consequents linked together, and it is really this linking, inasmuch as it reveals the reason of things, which is properly science. Science is the knowledge of things in their causes, says Aristotle.

Should we say of a man that he was strong in mathematics, because he knew by heart the propositions of the theorems of Euclid? Such a man would indeed know the conclusions of science; but he would not be a man of science. When he became one, coming to the proofs and their illuminating interdependence, would his progress be hindered by his knowing the bare text of the propositions beforehand?

Science, even in regard to a matter of faith, is not, then, dispossessed by faith of its own proper task. That remains untouched; in performing it, the man of science, understood as such and not merely as a man, is entirely free. Neither his principles, nor his methods, nor even his results considered as such allow the faith to exercise the least influence upon them.

The Vatican Council (Constitution *Dei Filius,* art. 4) declares quite positively that the sciences, each in its own domain, may freely use the principles that are proper to them and their proper methods. It calls this a "just liberty," which in no wise prevents it from maintaining that the Catholic man of science must respect dogma, which, to speak precisely, has the value not of a scientific result, but of a fact.

Everyone is bound to respect facts. When, in this connection, that is called a fact which is a part of the revealed deposit, it is proposed to men's acceptance without prejudicing its use or its verification incumbent on the man of science.

Lastly, to speak of that autonomy so dear to our thinkers, the autonomy which they claim with a pride which discovers a certain foundation of truth, can it not be said that it finds every legitimate satisfaction among us?

The faith, whereof we have spoken provisionally as of an exterior thing, to which we must adhere as from without, is not so exterior to us as that. The Church suggests it to us. But what is this Church but a society which we ourselves form? What is the Church but ourselves? Not, undoubtedly, an isolated ourselves, cut off from fraternal and divine communication; but it is ourselves forming that *organism* which I cannot grow weary of calling it, for the comparison is so illuminating; an organism wherein God is included, through Christ and the Spirit of Christ; an organism in which each member, important or insignificant, teaching or taught, finds life in which to share, and far from losing his personality, multiplies it, by absorbing the common sap.

We ourselves are the Church; the dogma of the Church is then, in a certain sense, our dogma. When our authorities define it they do not derive it from themselves; they do not impose it from without on the society as a thing which has so far been foreign to it; they extract it from its bosom, for it is the common tradition, under the protection of the common Spirit, which they borrow from it. They do not mean to create anything, but only to establish, to render explicit what was until then diffused in the common mentality or contained in the common treasure of the Scriptures.

All their task is to *declare,* that is to say to make clear, and moreover to signify to isolated individuals who refuse to adhere to the common faith on this point that they are thereby putting themselves in opposition to what creates the social tie between us, and that they are therefore outside. *Anathema sit:* this is the meaning of that formula.

Now when a man thinks to become free thus, he does not see that this freedom is the freedom of death; the freedom of the branch that falls, deprived of sap. It is the repeated comparison of the Saviour: *I am the vine, you the branches. No branch can bear fruit in itself, unless it abide in the vine.*

As for the believer who remains thus grafted on the stock, he is free with that liberty of the being which accords with its law and preserves its natural connections. Though he be humble among the humble, he can say that by sharing in the Christian thought for his part, he drinks in the full living truth of God; that he has this God for friend and as it were at his service, since the Spirit to which he entrusts himself, the collective belief which he accepts, are protected by a guarantee which is no longer a human guarantee.

His mind can be reassured, his heart, instead of agonising in this night in which we find ourselves, can expand in a

higher security. He will not be deceived as to what is the essential of life; he will not be hindered as to the rest. If he studies, he can turn aside in every direction of the truth without fearing any conflict between truths that are complementary and of necessity in harmony.

He will feel strengthened because he can lean upon the Divine certainties; he will feel free, because the Divine cannot be hostile to liberties, for it is their source; seeing that it is the Divine which receives their labours, for it is the Alpha and Omega of intellectual liberty to pass without trammels from one certitude to another which derives from it, from truth to truth; which means from the Divine to the Divine; and because there is just what is set before him.

The Divinity of faith is allied in him to the Divinity of reason; he unites them, like oxygen and nitrogen which compose the same atmosphere. And circulating freely in this human-divine environment, breathing it in and becoming filled with the Spirit of God which penetrates him, he says with St. Paul: *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* (1 Cor. iii. 17).

CHAPTER X

THE GOVERNMENTAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

THE dogmatic character of the Church, if properly understood, will in itself suffice for us to affirm its governmental character.

To affirm that the Church has a dogma, that is, a collective belief, is to demand that it have, in the intellectual order, a collective representation, that is, an authority.

But this notion, to which we shall have to return, is too partial. We must say more generally: There is in the Church a social authority, which fulfils all the offices that can be attributed to an authority with regard to such an end as hers. The Church is a governed society.

There are men to be found, whether liberal Protestants, or anarchists of mystical tendency like Tolstoi, who pretend that the Founder of Christianity, far from having foreseen and willed such spiritual government as operates among us, showed Himself opposed to every exercise of authority among His disciples. *The princes of the nations lord it over them; but it shall not be so among you; but let him that is chief among you be the servant of all.*

They neglect to notice that this text itself condemns the thesis which claims to be based upon it, since by legislating for *him that is chief,* it arranges for someone to be chief.

But they bolt this fallacy, and assure us that ecclesiastical authority has only been set up by the help of a deviation, caused on the one hand by natural ambition in the human heart, and on the other by imitation of the authorities which rule in the civil order, and notably the mighty and overshadowing authority of Rome.

This influence of the Rome of the Emperors over the Rome of the Popes we have no wish to deny; we have affirmed it before our opponents, and we have always considered it as a providential result in the Church's life.

Are we not repeatedly saying that our Church assimilates all that she finds assimilable in the human environment wherein she evolves? If it has pleased God to prepare for her in the juridical work of the Romans, as in Greek thought and Eastern poetry and symbolism, elements which could be for her what the food that has already been elaborated by life is physically for us, in contrast with chemical substances only assimilable with difficulty; who would be surprised at her taking possession of them? She did so, and she could

legitimately continue to do so, on condition that she took account of their relations and adapted them to the ends that she pursues. *All things are yours,* said St. Paul: *Omnia vestra sunt.*

If anything ought to belong to the Church and tempt her to accept it, it is that marvellous Roman administration, the most powerful which has ever been seen, the most perfect, at least as a centralised administration. Now this it is, as we are going to show, that is suited to the essence of Christianity.

We are far, as can easily be seen, from the theories of religious anarchy whose criticism the Church experiences.

Just now we have to ascertain whether a government properly so called is in place in the Christian organisation, or if it must be content with a vague evangelical spirit or a brotherhood without external ties.

But in reality we solved this question long ago, when we showed that religion is *par excellence* a social phenomenon; that it demands, and particularly so in Christianity, an organised society. Well, do we want a group without ties? a society without any authority? Such a thing nowhere exists, not even in the most ephemeral of societies.

Put a band of children in a playground; ten minutes after, one or several of them will be ruling, and that with the consent of the rest, so true is it that one can do nothing, not even amuse oneself, far less attempt to scale the lofty heights to which the Saviour has invited the human race, without the end in view being authoritatively provided with a *representation,* a *means* and a *defender.*

Can we think that it is Christ, and He alone, who is the Christian authority? Assuredly, we all obey the Saviour. But our Saviour is not there. Must He not have a living representative? Our Saviour does not now speak. Must He not have a voice? Our Saviour does not now act visibly. Must not someone guard and defend the flock in His name from the *ravening wolf?*

Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, said He to Peter. I am going away, though invisibly I remain with you; do thou then take My place, and be shepherd, not on thine own authority, for it is *My* flock; but on the authority which I leave thee when I say *Feed, pasce,* that is, lead to its pasture, direct, defend the flock of thy Saviour.

Those who wish to govern religion with a memory, though it be divine, with a book, though it be sacred, without there being anyone to keep the book, to comment on and interpret the tenor of the memory, do not know human nature. We are beings of flesh and blood; we are not shadows. We need something visible and consistent, in default of which

the book, which ought to unite, becomes a cause of division, and superhuman memories only a scattered perfume.

Do not they prove this who reproach us with existing, and are themselves from the religious point of view atoms without cohesion or form? Who then are these people who reproach us with being unfaithful to the Gospel by governing ourselves, and what do they derive from it? What do they derive from it that can be laid hold of, judged and accepted in common, with which man can live? They are still looking for the " essence of Christianity," and finding it everywhere; in a catastrophic theory of the end of the world, or in sympathetic—superficially sympathetic—nonsense about *non-resistance to evil.*

While they are looking about them so despairingly, our Church is defining Christianity and making it live. She defends it against deviations of every kind and every degree. If she herself is a deviation by reason of the manner of authority that she has adopted, it must at least be granted that this deviation is hostile to all the others, which means, perhaps, that it is very nature applying itself to the supernatural and making it useful to us by adapting it to essential forms of life.

But, it may be said, if Christ is no longer here, the divine Spirit which He promised to send into the world is always here, and the Holy Spirit is a living reality. He is the authority which does for our bond, a spiritual bond for a spiritual organism, the Church. O carnal-minded men who require a visible authority, do you not hear the Master saying: *The flesh profiteth nothing?* What is the use of the visible, when we have within ourselves *Him who cries: Father! Father!* and who Himself makes the unity of the children?

We have already replied to this illusion.

Not, assuredly, that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us is an illusion; nor that it would be incorrect to say that it is that Spirit who is the bond between us. But this bond, which is indeed the principal one, is however a bond only in the manner of a soul, a common soul in which we are one. Now is not our soul represented in our body by the fact of the organisation that it calls into being? An organism which presupposes a whole system of subordination, under the government of the central nervous system, under the government of the brain; a fairly faithful image of the organisation of the Church!

Precisely because the Holy Spirit is with us, He must be with us as we are, individual and *social* beings. He must reveal Himself by interior actions and by social communications, which presupposes an authority speaking in His Name

and receiving from Heaven the right to say, as our Apostles said at the first of the Councils : *It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.* As if the brain said : It has seemed good to the soul and to us, us nerve-cells, who represent the idea of organic realisation for the government of the body.

The Holy Spirit acts in individuals by grace; He acts socially through organisation, which is, as a theologian (Schaezler) says, *the most express manifestation of the grace of Christ,* being its visible and collective manifestation. The Spirit, who moves the Church inwardly through individual souls, moves it also outwardly, because *man as a corporate whole* is an external thing, *if man as a mental unity* is an inward thing. Religious inspiration and its control by authority; such, the divine initiatives being pre-supposed, are the two functions of the human-divine organism, as in civil society invention and creation come from private effort, their regulation from public authority.

Thus all comes from the same Spirit, the force that is displayed and its regulation. Humanity on both sides furnishes its material, and thereby limits or perverts its effects; but all the same it is Divinity which acts, as in the birth of a deformed child or of a monstrosity it is a divine soul that struggles, but with uncongenial material.

And so the reproach that Protestants offer to the Catholic Church turns on them and overwhelms them. In their eyes the great *Roman* crime is the debasing of man, by submitting him to an exterior authority. But if we raise ourselves to the level of the doctrine, we see that such an accusation is not very serious. It is precisely in order that the Spirit of God may not debase man in coming to us that an authority is necessary, if it be recognised that man is social.

Luther, Calvin, for whom original sin slays free will; for whom the Divine Spirit that regenerates us does so without our co-operation, must, at least in theory, repudiate exterior authority. What could it do except set itself up in opposition to the Spirit which does all in man, or else duplicate it?

For the Catholic, man remains man under the Divine touch. He receives *a spirit of adoption, not of slavery* (Rom. viii. 15), and with that Spirit to inspire him he governs himself. Only if to govern *himself* means, for individual man, to lead an autonomous life, it means for social man to lead a life in accordance with the common order, and so a governed life, a life that freely submits to the government.

The Spirit working within must be completed by the Spirit that works without, for otherwise this Spirit would not fall upon the whole man, and it is in that case that we should be " debased," deprived in the religious domain of our collective existence and the goods it confers on each soul. It

is in that case that we should be forbidden to say with Jacob : *I have seen God face to face and my life is safe.*

We do not therefore forget that Jesus said : *Call no man Master.* But for us it is perfectly clear that this does not mean, Suppress all authority, but, Understand authority as your servant. As in like manner when He said, *Resist not evil,* He did not mean to invite us to let the wicked triumph; but that we should renounce the spirit of egoism and revenge; and when He said *Take no thought what you shall eat,* He was not preaching laziness and lack of foresight, but inculcating submission to Providence, our previous effort being taken for granted.

All the sophisms which graft themselves on the divine paradoxes of the Gospel fail to understand its spirit, being themselves so partisan in spirit, and they go astray as a result of diminishing the truth.

After this we are free to enter into the real thought of our Master and to taste His adorable words, *Let him that is chief among you be the servant of all.*[1]

In place of the frightful abuses which pagan authorities so often committed—abuses which our unfaithfulness to the Gospel was bound in part to perpetuate and will yet long continue to perpetuate—the Saviour dreams of establishing, everywhere if possible, but in any case within His Church, a régime of humility and love.

Was it not for this reason that He chose for the first representative of supreme authority in the Church, for the first Pope, a man of no importance, who could not bring himself into the argument; a fisherman, who was likewise a sinner; a penitent who made a triple act of love that was sealed by martyrdom? And this to prove at the same time that authority is not a fief, but a service, and since it is a service, it is the proper office of love, even if it be love unto death.

Peter, lovest thou Me? is the question that Jesus put three times to the man whom He was going to invest with authority over those whom He had identified with Himself. And on his timid but affirmative answer, the Saviour said to Peter : *Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.*

He must know how to love, if he is to govern in accordance with the heart of the divine Master. Fatherhood is the ideal of the régime He founded.

Yes, this pre-eminently natural authority, sprung straight from God, granted with creative power to those who say in the name of love : Be ! and life flashes forth—this authority is the model of the religious authority. That is why we call

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, commenting on this precept, emphasises that in transgressing it we misunderstand the human being and treat him as a thing : " Creatures endowed with reason are governed for their own good ; others for the good of the higher creatures." (*Contra Gentes*, III, cxii.)

the supreme authority among us the *Pope*, that is father. That is why the Pope's assessors are called *Bishops*, that is to say *watchers*, and why we speak moreover of *curates* and the *cure* of souls—*curati, those who have charge*. We use, too, the word *Abbé*, another word for *father*.

All those names are worthy of veneration and fitting, because tradition has understood the Master's thought. Authority as public service; authority as a rôle that is humble and full of love, that is a part of the Good News of the Gospel, and the Christian future tried to conform its judgements and its phraseology thereto, though unhappily not always its actions.

Touching thus, as we must, on this pitiful question of the abuses of religious authority, we must, perhaps, admit that it is in part these deficiencies of men that afford a foothold to the absurd criticisms in which those people indulge who execrate authority in itself.

How often have we heard it said, in the presence of such abuses, such authoritative or monopolising acts of violence, on the part of those whose office it is to impart God and in whom it happens sometimes that they seem to wish to exploit Him—how often have we heard it said, even in our own hearts : Is it possible? Is it possible that this man, so vainglorious, so taken up with himself and his rights, so attached to money, so gentle to himself and so hard to others, can be the representative of Christ, the channel of His Spirit?

Yes, it is indeed possible ! It is possible, and it is well that it should be so, in order that we may know that God has espoused humanity with all its wretchedness, that He loves us to that point, and that it is not with any sham sort of human kind that He approaches us.

Would God be with men, if all those in whom He manifested Himself and acted were angels? He is with sinful and weak humanity. The *body of Christ*, as we have called our Church, is sometimes sick, its chiefest members like the rest. The higher man mounts on the ladder of authority—to say so is not to be wanting in respect for it—the more is he exposed by his office; he is himself smaller as compared with the office. In mounting up to the divine we see the disproportion become more and more evident, between the channel and the Source of the ideal immanent in the world.

If we read history with this thought before us, and find sad things there, and even if we find them still to-day, we must remember that the Saviour said : *Blessed is he who shall not be scandalised in Me*. Must we not believe that He extends the benefit of this saying to the representatives that He has given Himself, and that scandal, even apparently justified, would be no more allowable in regard to them?

Has the man who is not scandalised by the humility of the Son of God manifested in the mortal Son of Man any grounds for being scandalised at the humility of the Son of God manifested in the social Son of Man, Christ continued, taking upon Himself the miseries of all in His effort to overcome them?

The failings of the persons who hold authority do not destroy the authority, precisely because the authority does not belong to man. To reject it because man is blameworthy or weak or unintelligent is to affirm that one would obey him if he were faithful, intelligent and capable.

The Christian obeys God only; but he understands the word *He that heareth you heareth Me,* and prostrate before the common Father or bowing low before His representatives of every rank in the Catholic hierarchy, his heart is lifted high enough to say *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.* Whether Thy mouthpiece be the harmonious instrument of a great soul or the grating metal of egoism or ambition, or the dull and heavy lead of unintelligence, I will not discuss the tone, for I have understood the message. Since it is Thou in any case who speakest, when authority intervenes fully, it is to Thee that my glad obedience ascends. *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,* and submits.

CHAPTER XI

ON FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN THE CHURCH

WE find once more, in regard to the governmental character of the Church, the same opposition that is raised against her claim to impose upon us fixed beliefs. The two questions, indeed, are connected. Is not faith in itself obedience, an obedience of the mind?

We are asked to believe for the sole reason that light is the first condition of action for a reasonable being. *Thy light is thine eye,* says the Gospel. But the light which guides our walk does not compel us to walk. Besides light the traveller needs an impulse: a personal impulse, alone and on his own exclusive responsibility, if he walks on his own account; an exterior impulse if he is executing orders, like the soldier in an army on the march.

Now our Church is an army organised for conquest. Or to speak more clearly and without metaphor, it is a divine and human society, and every society, we would say, if it wishes to retain its members in the unity of a common life and to realise for their benefit the ends which have brought them together, finds itself compelled to bring into play an action which is on its part a government, on theirs an obedience.

It is against the necessity of a religious establishment thus founded that objection was first of all made; and in the second place, against the fact of this establishment by Christ. Now we come to the real principle of the opposition that is formulated. They talk of freedom in practice, as they boast about it in doctrine. They rebel against the claim of the Catholic Church to govern, especially where they like to assert that liberty is the rule, since the spiritual is the special domain of liberty. *The Spirit bloweth where it wills. Religions of Authority and Religions of the Spirit* is the title of a famous book.

While we do not fail to recognise that these counter-claims sometimes have an element of the sublime in the aspirations which dictate them, we desire to show how irrational they are.

Spiritual things, it is said, demand liberty. But liberty is not independence. Liberty being granted, it remains to mark out its use, and if liberty is granted in any order, its legitimate use is to consecrate, and so to serve the order in which it is found; and in serving the order to serve itself, which legalises authority's claim of obedience.

The distinction of the spiritual and the temporal is of immense importance; but it does not involve the consequences which are drawn from it. This distinction serves to diversify and to limit the applications and the methods of religious authority; it could not suppress that authority without attacking a general law of life, which may be thus expressed :

Every being which lives in an environment makes use of it, and makes its life accord with it, in *symbiosis* as a physiologist would say, is obliged to submit to its law. It can no longer claim a complete freedom; for its freedom would then be the refusal of the very life to which it belongs. And if this life were useful to it, this would mean its diminution; if the life were necessary, it would mean its suppression, at least so far as it lived in common with it.

We are full of illusions about our pretended independence, we who in everything live only by dependence.

" I " is a word which is very pleasant to the feeling we have of ourselves, and also, to our honour be it said, of the divine spark which operates in us. It would be a mistake as well as an injustice to lessen more than is necessary this great aspiration after individuality.

But the Divinity which is in us is also outside us; it overlaps us and rules us under all the forms in which we are bidden to carry on our life.

We are embedded in nature, which comes from God and which is doing a divine work; what would happen to us if we rejected its laws? Could we even do so? And if we could, should we not see it turn the immensity of its forces against us?

We are connected with a family circle, which, in the name of heaven, creates us, starts us, and binds our personal progress for many years; what happens to the child, when he escapes from the protection of his home?

We are connected with a social environment, which, by means of its traditions, its customs, its conditions of material, intellectual or moral existence, has moulded the soul and body of the generations which preceded us and from which we came. What happens to the person who is uprooted, if it is true that anyone can ever be quite uprooted, when, rejecting the social law, he finds himself obliged to fly, like the Wandering Jew of the story?

Humanly considered, in spite of our pretensions to freedom, we are only a point of concentration of the universal forces which have made up our body; of the moral forces which have formed and furnished our souls. We are a meeting-place; a meeting-place of powers dispersed or enveloping, of elements whereon we react, but necessarily under a law imposed by their nature and ours, by the nature of the society or quasi-society which we form with them.

And lastly, we are, quite directly this time, intimately, and with a unity beyond expression, in society with God. Even without speaking of positive religion, we are bound to Him in as much as He is the universal Environment, which contains and interpenetrates all others; that ineffable Environment whereof St. Paul has written that it is *in Him we live and move and are.* And so we all say, when we realise this great condition of our life : We have to obey God. It is the supreme expression of our consciousness.

So, in every order and at every stage, the law of obedience applies, and it is by means of it that our proud individuality comes to light.

Comte's saying is often quoted : *Obedience is at the base of perfection.* It is a saying of great scope, because it applies to every domain, and helps us to understand that the freedom to which we hold so fast, far from excluding obedience, evokes it, and that obedience in its turn, far from destroying freedom, completes it, since to make our existence perfect, to cause it to live in its environment and to absorb all its resources, as obedience, if properly understood, is seen to do, is to help us to be ourselves, seeing that this environment is ourselves; ourselves prolonged, sustained, stimulated, while awaiting the reactions that make us autonomous.

But have we not said also of our Church that it is ourselves? It is ourselves because it is God and the Spirit of God; it is ourselves because it is Christ, the universal Man, in whom from the religious point of view we are one; it is ourselves, because of God, of Christ and of us all, if we consent thereto, is formed an immense living being, of immense multiplicity and yet one, since the essence of Christianity consists in a life in common with God; in this world dimly, by grace accepted and lived; in the other, by glory communicated by our Father, enjoyed by us as sons and brethren, together.

Here there is one single human-divine body, and in it the law of the body is transposed, as we have had to say so often.

The freedom of the members, whereof each has its own law, and, as it were, its will, is our freedom in the Church, with this difference, that the members of the body have no separate destiny as members, whereas we as individuals have.

The subordination of the members, each of which obeys a collective law, in order to live by it while serving it, is our obedience in the Church, with this difference, that as each of us has a destiny, the government of the Church must respect it.

It remains always true that in this there is a hierarchy, because neither the member in the body nor the Christian in the Church is a reality free from attachments.

As, therefore, the brain represents the whole organism for the direction of its life, and in consequence each of its members also, so the religious authority represents in the Church the collective conscience, and consequently each conscience as well.

To believe is to participate in the directive idea of our life in common in the Lord, and it is, then, not to make an act of intellectual abdication, but to draw from Him who is first of all *Truth* in order that He may be *Way* and *Life;* to awake to oneself, as a disciple and a partaker of His light.

Likewise to obey is to share in a common action, which in this case is a divine and divinising action; and this in one's due place, as every life in common demands; and thus it is not to make a practical abdication, but to draw on Him who is the Life, and the better to possess oneself, as a sharer, in Him, in the divine life.

The individual conscience and the social conscience of the Church, represented truly by authority, thus mutually support each other, and far from our own losing anything thereby, it is reinforced, as the sound of the single string is reinforced when it is stretched on the sound-chamber and shares in the deep vibrations of the atmosphere which is shut up between its sides like a soul.

By means of this fruitful subjection, the citizen of the *Kingdom of Heaven,* as Christ called His Church, is truly nourished with all the divine sap which circulates in humanity thanks to this outpouring of heaven on earth.

I am the vine and you are the branches; the branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine.

The authority which represents Christ makes the same demands, but for the same benefits; and the man is very undiscerning who does not see that to belong to himself without giving himself is simply to mutilate himself by allowing the best of him to atrophy.

When this best is the very life of God communicated to us in the Church, to deny oneself to it is to divest one's being of all the nobility of the divine which is meant to be manifested in it, as well as to do unspeakable injury to the pitying and brotherly majesty which willed to bear humanity on its breast, across the meritorious difficulties and the fruitful miseries with which our mortal life is filled.

Let it not be said, then, that religious obedience is opposed to our personal initiative. Religious obedience is bound to respect personal initiative properly understood. If it does not respect it, it is guilty of an abuse, and we are not attempting to apologise for abuses. But apart from abuses, religious obedience does not only respect personal initiatives, it enriches them, and that is why it exists.

To speak of servility in this connection is in reality to

misuse all the terms employed. For servility would consist rather in departing from our natural ties—by which must be understood also our supernatural ties, since the supernatural is for us a second nature—under the pressure of things inferior to us. To abase oneself below oneself and to deliver oneself to what abases one, that is slavery.

We must add—or perhaps it would have been better to begin with it—that religious obedience, in ruling us, only exercises rights which have been granted to it by our own free will. For, as we said before in regard to faith, it is conscience which comes first in this matter, authority occupies only the second place.

Before admitting or refusing that multiplication of life which religious feeling, which is a social feeling, offers to supply to us in exchange for the necessary obedience, we must first of all examine whether it is fitting for us to enter into the organism in which this exchange operates.

No one asks us to believe before we have ascertained and decided in principle what has to be believed. Likewise no one asks us to obey except on the same condition.

The Catholic Church offers herself to us; she does not bind us. He who lives outside her embrace may indeed have to endure her maternal importunity; but he has not to fear her tyranny.

For those who are unbaptised the Church has always been full of consideration and reserve.

But if you consent, or, not yet being in a position to consent, someone who counts for you in that as in everything else causes your existence to enter at least provisionally into the spiritual organism which must cause it to grow and bear it up to God, where would be the tyranny in its claiming your obedience? The first initiative covers and informs the final submission.

Nothing then is tyrannical, neither the beginnings nor the development of our religious life.

There could only be oppression in the event of authority exceeding its rights, as if, when the brain works badly, the disturbed organism is driven to react instinctively in self-defence. But who is going to give this disorder as much as a right?

It is admitted as elementary, in religious philosophy, that every law has its limits, as well as its justification, in its *raison d'être*. What is the *raison d'être* of religious authority for us? To bind us to Christ and to God for the sake of our supernatural destinies. It is this end then that determines the extent and the limits of the rights of religious authority. It has to do with the direction of the spiritual life and of what depends upon it in so far as it depends upon it. What

depends on it directly is directly amenable to it; what depends on it indirectly is amenable to it so far as it does so.

When, then, authority goes beyond its proper domain, it exceeds its own rights and has no claim on our obedience. In such a case we shall be practically in the position of the Christian thinker of whom we said that the claims of faith cannot bind him beyond certain things.

Evidently, there is always room for prudence, for mistrust of oneself, and even more for maintaining a respectful attitude towards individuals. But the question is one of freedom, and that, in this case, is unimpaired. What more can we desire, if we are really defending not anarchy, not the loosening of religious ties in the name of an individualism inimical to all life, but the inalienable rights of the individual?

Is it not strange that it should be precisely our century—a century of social science and of solidarity if ever there was one, and consequently of authority, apart from wandering into the most inconsistent utopias—which rejects the Church because she refuses to be individualist!

Thinking that they had destroyed the religious life by killing it in themselves, we saw its politicians attempt but yesterday to replace it by enunciating theories of *moral unity,* of monopoly and spiritual collectivism, theories which cannot express anything except on condition of inviting men to erect once more, and this time arbitrarily, the authority they claimed they had destroyed.

But we are assured that if this experiment had been pursued or were to be pursued to-morrow, in spite of our tragic lessons, the truth would not be long in making itself impressively felt.

The more a man departs from lawful authority, that is, authority normally constituted, whether by God or by the nature of things, the more he is obliged to fall back into arbitrary claims to authority.

To upset the order of nature, and even more the order of God, who, for us, is more natural than nature itself, is to destroy the harmony of forces; and violence, unbending against the rebellion of things, against the more terrible rebellion of souls, is the only refuge of him who wishes to maintain unity at all costs.

May God keep us from such authority, and maintain moral unity among us! The Church undertakes such a mission with regard to her baptised children. More and more she fulfils it by means of gentleness. She sometimes admonishes with severity; she does not use violent constraint. The only punishment of those who refuse is to be handed over to themselves. Would to God that this sanction were not the most terrible of all!

To be handed over to oneself means to be handed over to

the nothingness that we are without God, when we reject His redeeming hand. To be handed over to oneself means to be thrown into the sea, a tiny, proud castaway who struggles a moment, raises his head, and then sinks, overturned, broken by what had seemed ready to support him, engulfed by the nameless and cruel death whose name is God, but God outraged, God despised and forsaken, who in His turn forsakes.

Tragic isolation, which makes us the flotsam of an angry Infinity, when we might be the passengers in the noble ship amidst the universal storm!

The world is storm-beaten under the breath of the Creator Spirit, which grows gentle in fruitfulness like the tossing, unfathomable depths of the ocean. Lord, forsake us not!

BOOK III

THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

I.—*THE SACRAMENTS*

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL IDEA OF THE SACRAMENTS

WE have attributed to the Church as its fundamental characters the *dogmatic* character, the *governmental* character, and the *sacramental* character.

Dogma, hierarchy, worship whereof the *sacraments* are the centre, and which the *sacramentals* carry into a wider field, are indeed the three aspects of Catholic life as tradition has always envisaged it.

Why, in the Catholic Church, does religious life clothe itself with this sacramental character, which makes us transpose into the spiritual sphere and mark by means of sensible signs all the happenings of life : birth by *baptism,* growth by *confirmation,* nourishment by the *Eucharist,* generation or the nourishment of the species by *matrimony,* government by *Holy Order,* the attempt at moral renovation by *penance,* death itself, considered as an event like any other and not as a termination, by *extreme unction,* etc. ?

This sacramental character is based on the same notion as all the other characters of the Church.

We are in a supernatural society, that is to say, in relation with God, as a whole, and together with all that we are.

Now the supernatural is only nature pushed farther, beyond its own frontiers, and transposed into a higher mode. Daily life, then, must be transposed too, to be put on the same level. Yet it must continue to be itself and preserve its own natural relations.

The conciliation of these requirements is effected through sacramentality, which makes channels for God's action through every field of life; and also makes man's action ascend into harmony, and in all its fulness to meet the divine, and translates this exchange or this gift into visible actions, because we are of the vsible world; with the collaboration of matter, because matter and spirit, in religion as in all else, are the two faces of reality; the result expected, moreover,

being equally twofold, since the redemption towards which we tend by our religious effort concerns our body as well as our soul; in this world so that it may be a docile companion; in the other so that it may be blessed with the overflow of our happiness.

These few words might suffice at need to justify the sacramental life of the Church; but to those who are not too frightened by philosophic points of view a few considerations may be presented which may perchance help to throw more light thereon.

By sacraments we mean rites which imply a visible action, a matter, forms which express an effect expected from God, and to which, given all the necessary conditions, we attribute efficacy to produce this effect.

For example, baptism consists in an act of purification, in which water has its place as the matter, while words animated by an intention determine its use; and its result for the subject of it is a spiritual effect, namely, incorporation into the Christian unity.

Why, we ask, these exterior acts, this introduction of matter, this salvation by means of incantations, touchings, ritual words, ceremonies, rhythmic gestures, all of them things which appear to be borrowed from a domain of life very far removed from the spiritual, the proper object of religion?

Let us first of all remark that the Saviour, who said: *The flesh profiteth nothing, The hour cometh when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth,* none the less submitted in fact to the baptism of John, instituted a baptism of His own, founded the Eucharistic supper and more or less explicitly all the rest, giving the impetus to the whole of the ritual movement of the Church.

So that the "spiritual" who desire to exclude from religion the manifestations they think to be tainted with paganism cannot base themselves upon Him.

But such persons, if they are philosophers, might perhaps consider the saying of Pascal: "Man (in religion as in everything else) is neither an angel nor an ass, and unluckily whenever he wants to play the angel he only plays the ass."

Man does not consist of the spiritual only. And since man is undoubtedly spirit, but spirit incarnate, and incarnate in the unity of one sole substance: what is philosophic in religion is that the human soul ascends towards God, to whom religion has to *bind* it, along with the flesh and by making use of the flesh; and that God descends to man, to the mind and the heart of man, by the flesh and by making use of the flesh. The flesh therefore is a natural means of communication for religious reciprocity between God, who, having made

man, has to approach him as He has made him, and man who, being thus made, must correspond with God's action in accordance with his own nature.

It is for this reason that the whole religious movement starts from an Incarnation. The Flesh of Christ, which is at the same time divine and *ours* through fraternal solidarity, is given to us, makes expiation for us, and stoops even to immolation before the ineffable and offended God. And inversely, in It and through It, God welcomes humanity to Himself, adopts it as His child, glorifies it, and eternises it by anticipation. So that in the Scriptures the Saviour's Resurrection is always presented as not only the pledge, but the beginning of our own. It is with it as with a giant whose head is in the heavens, and who must ascend thither altogether. Are we not the Body of Christ, all of us in whom the universal Man is continued and wills to be completed, in whom God follows up and wills to consummate the consequences of His Incarnation?

Here we have already the motive for introducing into religion sensible and operative signs, rites which express us and are meant to give us to the supernatural; which express the supernatural and are meant to give it to us.

The real and *physical* efficacy of the sacraments, for the giving of grace, is thus explained.

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But this is not all; there is a more general reason for the same truth, joining with it also the explanation of these interventions of matter in the religious life; water for baptism, bread and wine for the Eucharist, oil for anointings, and so on.

The point of contact of religion in us is the essence of our human nature; that whereby we are all of us one, without distinction of race, age, nation, sex, social situation, ideas, particularist tendencies, and so on. And that is why the true religion is universal, or Catholic; catholic in space, catholic in time, profoundly catholic, cutting clean through all that distinguishes, divides, separates the human children of God.

Everyone agrees in this. But this is not enough. Why thus stop half-way?

Having arrived at that which makes us all brethren, our basic human nature, we are enabled to pass the barrier, and to feel ourselves brethren, in the unity of all being, of every creature that issues from the universal Source.

We have extended thus far our notion of the Catholicity of the Church, we have comprised all this in its unity. Are we not invited so to do by the wonderful teaching of the Gospel included in the words *the Kingdom of God?*

The Kingdom of God—that is to say, the universality of creatures of which God is the Father, whom He leads all to the same end, the manifestation of His goodness. He leads them, it is true, by different paths, and in accordance with an order that takes account of their natures, of their respective values; but it is precisely according to this order that matter is for spirit, the transient for the immortal. So that we see all nature spreading, like a carpet, beneath the feet of the thinking creature. Angel or man, man of this world or of another, every immortal living being must benefit by Paul's saying: *All is for the elect.* And doubtless, in this phrase with its immense content, Paul means to proclaim that final order which eternal life has to realise, that which the philosopher of Königsberg called *the kingdom of ends.* But before the kingdom of ends comes the *service of ends;* before the goal comes the road, and the law of harmony which the subordination of matter to spirit expresses must be manifested in it in the same way.

Matter, then, has its rôle in the religious movement. Man carries it along with him; through it God comes to man. And particularly is this true of our body, which is conjoint matter: which is nature, in us, in order to connect us with nature; which is of the universal lump although it carries within it the leaven of the spirit. But it is true also of the elements of this world; water for the baptised, symbolic and active oil for holy unction, air for the vibration of the sacramental words, bread and wine to be transmuted, while retaining their symbolism, into the Reality of the Lord.

External matter is not so external as all that. External matter is only man continued, since it is the power of the soul that fashions it, unites it in a small way to itself, abandons it at death only to take it up again, like the statuary who makes endless working models of the same clay, makes it submit to himself in a broader and looser, yet real fashion, by his dominion over nature; for this too is a manner of imposing the soul on matter, since the idea, if not the spirit itself, moulds it into shape.

When we think of these concordances we ought not to be astonished at the apparent materiality of our rites. This materiality, which is moreover quite relative, since the spirit is always the end, since the spirit is also the condition, seeing that matter without it can do nothing—this materiality is only an integration.

Man's religion is material like himself, like his interior and exterior environment; and it is fitting to give this environment a share in our action and in the actions which concern

us, in order that they may be really our action and our concern.

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It may be usefully remarked that sacramentality is not the law of the Church alone. It is the law of all things.

There are sacraments in nature also.

What is nature itself but a sublime sacrament? Symbol of God as it is, and able effectively to communicate His presence to us, it tells our mind something of what He is; it gives our spirit, by means of life wherein the whole of nature plays its part, a little of that multiform divine nourishment which is its being.

But since nature left to itself and our mind left to itself could have no intercourse with each other, they had to find a common ground, our body. Hence the body, too, is a sacrament, that is, an active symbol, since, by being a universe in epitome, a *microcosm,* it expresses that other universe, and serves as a passage whereby the great universe may cause our soul to awake to it and to herself.

Lastly in the operation of our being, between soul and body, there are also sacraments.

Vibrations that affect our organs by external actions, and inwardly transmuted into images, sensations and felt impulses —what are these but active symbols, which express the world and make it act?

Is not the mental image a sacrament, in relation to the idea that it suggests, since it *suggests* and *signifies,* and is therefore at the same time both sign and active reality?

Thus harmony shows itself everywhere. Supernature is reflected in nature; nature is crowned by supernature. Matter plays its part of servant in relation to mind. Good in itself, it becomes excellent when it lends itself to communicating to us the *Best.* It is the ladder whereby God mounts to us from the depths of being, that He may emerge, without our resisting Him, from the innermost depths of *our* being.

This divine ascent, which grace realises in us, has for its general means Christ, since He is the rightful intermediary, the true *Way* of life, as He called Himself, when He said : *No man cometh to the Father*—and doubtless also nothing comes from the Father—*but by Me.*

And then, an unexpected consequence, but one which closely binds up into a compact bundle all that we have just said—It is Christ, the person of Christ that is the sacrament *par excellence,* the first sacrament, the *sole* sacrament, since whatever we call a sacrament is only a continuation of His symbolic and real action; symbolic, since He is a manifestation of God; real, because He is God given to us.

Christ, by expressing the divine and causing it to act; by

employing to that end, as well as His soul, His suffering and glorified Flesh, after taming exterior nature; and then by founding, in order to carry on His Body and Soul, a visible society wherein the spiritual life depends on and uses sensible reality; Christ, by so doing, made Himself truly the *Way*, in the proper sense of the word.

Every soul draws near to God through Him as by a road of flesh.

Every soul touches God by means of those successive contacts whereof the sacrament of baptism is the first, whereof the most holy Humanity of Christ is the last.

When we give one of the faithful that sacrament of which we shall shortly have to say that it sums up all the others, the Eucharist, we say to him : *May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep thy soul unto eternal life.* In the Dominican rite the words are "keep *thee,*" body and soul, "unto eternal life." The Body of Christ has the power of saving our soul because he touches God's soul who touches God. And our own soul, if we continue the chain, can, with Him, save our body, and in part its natural continuation, the world.

The ordering of these things is indeed sublime.

We would like to show that it is not so unusual as it seems to certain folk. The greatest modern philosophers have forged systems which revive in an astonishing fashion these old sacramental points of view which narrow rationalism, unscientific at bottom, wished to believe dead.

Leaving at this stage these questions which make us digress from our subject, let us examine, one after another, the seven links of this sacramental chain, which for our Church, that vessel moored to God, is as it were the chain of its anchor.

As we test the firmness of each link, we shall regain the feeling of the divine reality to which they attach us, and see under what conditions we are upborne by the solid ground lying unfathomably deep below the tossing waves of the visible world.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISM

THE sacraments, then, are signs and means of supernatural life which, through the Church, extend to us the sanctifying action of Christ and of the divine Spirit which is in Him.

To this we would add that the supernatural life is similar to the natural; that it allows of birth, growth, nourishment, a remedy for its ills, a recovery from its mishaps, and in regard of the Societies which it rules, a government and multiplication of its subjects which overcome the effects of death.

It is these various functions which it is the mission of the seven sacraments to fulfil.

The first—in order, if not in honour—is naturally that which effects birth.

When Jesus was on the point of entering on His public life, that is, of undertaking, by means of His preaching, His example, His authoritative decisions, His miracles, and afterwards by His sufferings and death, the work from which the Church was to arise, He betook Himself to the bank of the Jordan, *and as all the people,* says St. Luke, *were baptised with the baptism of John, Jesus also was baptised.*

He accepted solidarity with His people, as, Himself divine, He had accepted solidarity with humanity.

This baptism of Jesus inaugurated His proper mission. It was as it were His entry into the *Kingdom of God* which He was going to found on earth. He entered it as the sun enters into the day, and after Him, we, the satellites, should enter too.

Baptism is indeed, for the Christian, the entry into the earthly *Kingdom of Heaven,* the Church. The spiritual washing, which frees us from the sin of the race and from what we have added to it on our own account, is only a prelude and a negative disposition.

Moreover, what is the sin of the race, so far as we have part in it, but the fact of being deprived, by our collective fault, of normal and filial relations with God? Every sin, original or actual, is only that. So that to be incorporated with God through Christ and to quit the state of sin are the same thing.

But to signify this effect negatively, by saying that baptism frees us from sin, is not enough. We must say: Baptism incorporates us into Christ. And as, for us, the approach to Christ is the Church, seeing that we attain to Him only

through her, as we attain to God only through Him, it is even more definite, or in any case more direct, to say : Baptism is incorporation into the Church.

The ancients called baptism *illumination.* And this word is not only a beautiful expression, but a useful lesson.

Truth, in religion as everywhere in life, is the first of things. We only live according to certain forms because we believe in certain things, in certain ends, and wish by our acts to adapt ourselves thereto. *He who comes to God,* as St. Paul said, *must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder,* and all the rest of what He has said to men through Christ in order to throw light on the eternal road.

The first thing, then, is to believe; and thus to enter into the light of life. Practice comes afterwards.

We cannot admit that inversion which makes some people apologists for the " ancestral act," that is, for the exterior forms of the faith, while they refuse the faith itself. Baptism, which opens the door of the Church, is called *the sacrament of faith,* because faith is the first disposition that must be brought to it.

But, as faith is an act common to God and man, to *man* who assents and to God who operates on his heart; as baptism, the sacrament of faith, carries grace with it; in consideration of its divine side it is called *illumination,* to mark the interior action of the Spirit, to which the soul gives itself.

But then this question immediately presents itself : Why give baptism to children, in whose case faith can only be a fictitious acquiescence, as far as they are concerned; and a sleep of grace, as far as the divine effect is concerned?

Ought not this gate of the Church, which we call the sacrament of faith, to be reserved for those who can advance towards faith?

Can a *spiritual* society admit into itself those whose minds are not yet awake?

What is the meaning of this incorporation of one who is absent-minded? For is not the little crying infant whose soul is held captive in unconsciousness a victim of absence of mind?

The Christian life is wider than this individualist objection. We human beings are not only individuals; we are associations, and in this double character of ours it is the association, not the individual, that comes first. Individuality is a conquest.

If this famous solidarity about which so much noise is made and which some folk pretend they have invented in opposition to us be anything more than a vague word, it means that some of us can stand for others; that, given the proper condi-

tions, we can make decisions for others, act for others, and likewise, when all conditions are fulfilled, believe for others.

This is no paradox; it is the most ordinary thing in life. A father believes on his child's behalf that bread is a necessity; he gives it to him : he believes in the benefits of sanitation, and applies its precepts; he believes that instruction is a tool of life, and teaches; he believes in morality, and inculcates it. He does not wait for a belated act of free-will to enable his child to make up its mind as to all these things.

Likewise the father who believes that Jesus is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life,* and that the Church is Christ acting to-day, incorporates his son into the Church; he recites the Creed in his name; the Creed of the society, from which the child is not yet detached; his entry, unconscious, and yet spiritual, through solidarity, into that common Church which is like Hugo's common earth :

> Where thy mother holds her mother and thy sire his sire.

The child will have to renew this gift of himself later on, to take its responsibility upon himself; but from the beginning, God, the founder of paternity, and chooser of the solidarity, sanctions it, by doing in this child, so far as the child is capable of it, what He would do in the well-disposed adult. He places in him a seed of grace of which the soul will make use when it has awakened to itself, unless it prefers to profane it, by repudiating both God and its father's affection and love.

To receive baptism is then, positively considered, to draw near to Christ by means of His Church. Negatively, it is escape from evil, and, therefore, renunciation of godless nature and all its perverse powers or tendencies. This is what is meant by *renouncing Satan, his pomps and his works.* And to indicate that we do not draw back but go forward, we say : *And I give myself to Jesus Christ for ever.*

The symbolism of the sacrament is connected with this double notion.

Its matter is water. Not only because water purifies, which connects it with the negative action of baptism, but for other and more profound reasons.

Human traditions have always tended to connect water with the origin of things, as if in anticipation of modern theories which take life's beginnings from the bottom of the sea.

From this point of view, baptism means : Thou who art born of the sea, dive again into that still deeper sea, the sea of the Divinity, whereof the ocean is but an outpouring. It is in this Origin of origins, this Source of sources, that thou must lose thyself one day, in order truly to find thyself, and

from now on, by grace and holiness of life, it must order thy innermost being, as the water of the sea, the element in which thy life began, bathes thy members.

The washing of baptism, then, will act as a stimulative and truly regenerative goad, since it must restore to us, by its very constitution, our original and natural element, the element of the divine.

Here we have only modernised ideas borrowed from the doctors of the Church, who add that the natural coldness of water and its refreshing purity are symbols of the refreshment which grace opposes to that sinful excitement of the flesh which impels us to evil.

By its transparency water also signifies the soul's receptivity of the divine light.

When, in the completer ceremonies of olden times, the catechumens were immersed, there was seen also a kind of death, followed by a resurrection, as if the man of sin were destroyed to make room for the new man engendered by the action of Christ.

All these symbols are beautiful, and there is no reason to overlook them in our résumé.

Such, then, is the matter of baptism. And given this symbolic matter, the ritual words, animated by the intention of the minister who in his action is united to the Church, and thereby to Christ, and by them both to Him whose word operates above all—these words, we repeat, consecrate the matter, by determining its spiritual signification, and thereby they achieve the sign which the institution and permanent presence of the Saviour cause to become effective.

Moreover, since we have compared baptism to a birth, and we know that every birth needs to be aided by those who have or are deemed to have the fulness of life, we introduce the godfather and godmother, whose office, so rarely understood in the days of our decadent Christianity, should be to encourage in the new-born child of Christ the religious life which he has received; to defend it in him, and to aid him, if necessary, to bring its fruits to perfection.

Lastly, since baptism is the rite of birth in Christ, through whom we draw nigh to God, and in the Church through which alone we draw nigh to Christ, it is natural that baptism should be declared necessary, necessary with the *necessity of a means,* as we say in theology. Where shall we find a means of salvation outside that which gives us to Christ, who said: *"No man cometh to the Father but through Me"?* And where, again, shall we find a means of salvation outside the Church, which is only the continuation of Christ in time?

There is in this a necessity which implies, by its very constitution, the religious plan of the world.

Amen I say to you, declared Jesus to Nicodemus, *unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

In these words, the necessity of baptism shows itself as it is, that is, not a pure material necessity; not the necessity of an exterior rite; but a moral necessity, namely, the necessity of spiritual incorporation with the Saviour, whereof actual baptism is only the official and ordinary means.

We cannot, then, say that whoever has not received the baptism of water is lost. That would be an atrocity of which religion is not guilty. But since it is the official means, if it be not utilised, a moral substitute is necessary. The unconscious infant has none, and that is why, if he is threatened with having to leave this life without having actually lived, we attach such great importance to the fact of his sanctification without his co-operation, in covering him with the influence of Christ through the collective influence of the Church, of which baptism is the sign.

Only in this way can the moral necessity we have referred to be satisfied, and that goes without saying when once we have understood the character of visibility, the social and consequently exterior character which the spiritual has to put on in the Church.

From this point of view, the benevolent opinion of certain theologians, according to which infants can be incorporated by their parents' faith, is very illogical. The Church aims only at the spiritual, and the spiritual suffices at need among those who are capable of it. But when the subject furnishes none of it, it does not belong to the Church, a social organisation functioning in the visible world, to supply for it through the invisible. The parents' faith does not represent the Church. On the contrary, the rites that have been instituted represent it. And hence the difference of judgement with regard to these two cases, when it is a question of incorporation with the Church.

Does this mean that the fate of innocents has no concern for us? God forbid! But, in the first place, unbaptised children are not, properly speaking, innocents, for the fault of the race affects them. All the same, as this fault is not personal, we all agree broadly that they are not *punished* for it, unless in a sense of the word which no longer gives rise to scandal.

They are punished in this sense, that they do not get as far as the Christian expects to do; and that is a negative punishment.

Positively, while we have no revelation in regard to them, we hope that their lot is a happy one; that they bless God for

their life, and that though they may have something left to desire, they do not feel envy, being satisfied with their lower humanity.

Theirs is as the temporal lot of a child born in Guiana, whose parents were deported convicts, and whose brothers, by a happy chance, were brought back to France. The latter would have reason to praise God; but the former would have no right to make indignant demands. He is not punished personally. Guiana is a place one can live in. If, however, he feels the pressure of a family liability, that is a condition of human affairs which does not afford any justification for revolting.

Has a man good grounds for complaining, if he has the lot that he deserves, because a happier lot has eluded him?

The child who dies without baptism has merited nothing, conquered nothing personally; collectively, he belongs to a guilty race; he has nothing to demand; he has nothing to hope for except from the free goodness that welcomes him. If he complains because others have had access to regeneration, God can reply to him what the master of the vineyard replied to the jealous husbandman of the parable: *Am I not free to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?*

We must understand, here as elsewhere, that in the constitution of an order, inequalities are not injustices, although there is in this matter, it must be admitted, a problem of providence which is beside the present question.

As for the adult, who can be united to Christ through the spirit, his case is not the same. If he does not despise the official means, yet does not find it within his reach; if he is invincibly ignorant of it; even if he despises it, but does so through an error which is not morally imputable to him, such a man may become one who is baptised by the Spirit, and may receive the effects of baptism.

God's grace is not tied down to the sacraments, say all our doctors. Actual baptism, as a means of incorporation with Christ, is the law; but the law does not tie the hands of the Lawgiver. God, who holds the key of souls, says St. Thomas Aquinas, has no need, if He wills to enter, to call the porter, the hierarchical Church. The sacraments are our servants, *Sacramenta propter homines;* we are not their slaves.

The same St. Thomas, wishing to mark, on one side, the correctness of the official language, and on the other to reserve the rights of God and of the individual conscience, establishes his teaching concerning the necessity of baptism in two articles the order of which is curious.

First article: Is baptism necessary for salvation?—Answer, Yes.

Second article: Can a man be saved without baptism?—Answer, once more, Yes.

Under this apparent contradiction, the fact is that the first article, in its general form, lays down the law; whereas the second, in its particular tenor, is concerned with individual cases, and allows for the accidental, whatever its extent may be.

The verbal means of conciliation between these two theses is included in the famous distinction of the three baptisms: *Baptism of water,* which is always the official means; *Baptism of blood* or martyrdom, which is greatly superior to it, since it carries even to heroism the gift of oneself to Christ which makes on our side the whole value of baptism; lastly, *Baptism of desire,* it being understood that this desire may be simply implicit, carrying with it no knowledge or recognition of real baptism.

The baptism of desire, understood in this last fashion, is not other than *conversion of heart,* as St. Augustine says, that is love of supernatural good so far as it is understood, and the sincere disposition to adopt its means, whatever they may be, as soon as they are known.

Now this disposition is called a baptism because, since it in fact constitutes an interpretative baptism, it assures its fruits, and incorporates the man whose soul arrives at it not only with God, who sees the heart, but with the Church itself. Not the hierarchic and visible Church, since that by hypothesis is either unknown or misunderstood; but the interior, invisible, universal Church, of which the other is only the symbol and the means.

None the less would it be said that the man thus justified owes his salvation to the Church as it is, to the visible Church; for however much he may approach to it considered only as invisible, he cannot dissociate its body and its soul. The Church, to the soul of which he becomes united, saves him none the less by its body; or rather by the whole of herself. Such as she is, she is the sole means of salvation, just as Jesus Christ is, whom she contains and represents to us.

Yet the spiritually baptised, if inculpably ignorant of or mistaking the outward Church, only belongs directly to the inward Church, the Church which can be defined as the society of souls of good will,[1] after these necessary explanations.

Such is baptism.

In all the other sacraments we shall find something of it, as in every development we find the starting-point.

[1] *Cf. infra,* book v., chaps. i.-iv.

Baptism, the door of our Church, ought to seem as precious to us in the spiritual realm as those gates of the Baptistery at Florence, which Michael Angelo called *gates of Paradise,* in the history of art.

It is indeed the gate of Paradise, this baptism of ours, since it incorporates us with Him who said : *I am the door of the sheep: if any man enter through Me, he shall find pasture.*

The Christian has only to watch that he does not go back from this door, by dreaming of the evil from which it cuts him off; by turning his back on the Eternal towards which it sets his face, as the giant opening of the Egyptian pylons set the face of the faithful towards the sanctuary, far off and full of mystery, beyond the sphinx-lined paths that led up to it.

CHAPTER III

CONFIRMATION

BAPTISM effects our birth into the spiritual life, either, in the case of an adult, by a personal act, or, in that of an infant, by the act of another which is authorised by Christian solidarity, which the future is to consecrate, and God, in the meanwhile, sanctions.

Confirmation, as its very name indicates, *confirms* us in what baptism produced. That is, its purpose is to complete what the first rite began.

It is a complement, a complement on our side, because it calls for a more complete, a more active giving up of ourselves to our higher realities; a complement on the part of God, by a renewal of grace destined to aid this giving up and to make it fructify.

If we thus begin twice over, it is firstly because our life is subject to time, and it is good to seize it again at every turning, in order to draw from it all that its inconstancy permits. It is also to follow more closely the conditions of the symbolism that is at the base of our sacramental institutions.

By the symbol we hope to strengthen the reality; it will be wise, then, in part to bend the reality to the symbol.

Now in physical life, which, as always, furnishes our religious symbols, birth is followed by growth.

It is not that these two functions are essentially diverse. Birth is a first growth; growth is a continuous birth. So we would say, in the spiritual, that all the sacraments merely continue the effect of baptism, and that baptism is only the entrance to the other sacraments. But yet we distinguish these two things, birth and growth. Our rites, too, make the same distinction.

Moreover, there is a capital difference between the religious symbol and physical reality; for the laws of the spirit, although they are parallel to the laws of the body, are not identical with them.

Physical life has a maximum. One is born an infant; one becomes a youth, and then a man; after that comes the decline, and the perfect age is passed. In the spiritual, the perfect age is not only not passed, but not attained. It is an ideal. *Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,* said our Lord. We cannot claim to attain to that. We steer towards it as the ship does towards the stars.

A sacrament of perfection cannot then, in reality, *give* its

effect; it can only symbolise it, and signify a progress which, by the direction that it takes, puts us on the way to fulness.

What is that direction? That is what the symbolism of the sacrament is going to teach us.

The child, as compared to the man, is characterised by his weakness. Growth, for him, is the obtaining of strength, and the capacity really to live the life of a man. Thus confirmation will be the sacrament of strength in order to lead the Christian life in its fulness.

On the other hand, the child is entirely given up to its own self-development. It feeds, it plays, it sleeps, it prattles, it attempts little gestures which represent in embryo what it will do later on. But all this is for it only a kind of self-creation. Properly speaking it does not act; for it does not produce. It does not communicate any of its life to others. It does nothing for the benefit of society. It is society which turns to it to form it by a physical and moral education.

If our eyes knew how to see, instead of only submitting to appearance, we should perceive, above the cradle which shadows a young destiny, humanity and nature leaning, the ages bent, God's Eternity present and the whole race, by means of humble representatives, fostering a life which does not yet know what life is.

A mother who suckles her child, or puts the tiny spoon into the tiny mouth which the inexpert hands cannot even help, is the symbol of humanity, which has its agelong toil drawn out for or poured into the needy souls of the young.

Later on, the relations are partially reversed. While still continuing to receive, the completed man gives. What the ages have done for him, he helps to bequeath to them enriched. He adds his collaboration to that immense collaboration whereof he was the beneficiary, and to the support procured for him by his surroundings he adds his support, like the pontoon supported by the water, which in its turn supports.

In addition, the man who acts thus for the good also defends the good. The two actions complete one another; for our good being ceaselessly lain in wait for, ceaselessly menaced, the man who labours is always in the position of the builders of the temple, who held the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other.

What is there in the spiritual sphere which answers to these facts? A double application of them will be manifest; an application to the Church herself, an infant before she grew; and an application to each of us. And the effective symbols which correspond to these two cases are the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in the one; Confirmation in the other.

For the society, the manifestations of the Spirit in the Cenacle are the striking mark of the interior effects of the sacrament in the case of individual Christians.

As at the Baptism of Christ, the first of our baptisms, visible signs revealed what would be the effect of baptism in each one of us, taking account always of what was special to the case of Christ; thus too at the Cenacle, in the matter of confirmation.

For the Apostles, the symbols of the Spirit are the tongues of fire, the sign of ardent conquest and of collective communication; the rushing wind, passing over the spaces of the earth and the sea, like the bearers of the Good News. And that signifies a combined action. It is the Church which is confirmed here. It is the Apostles also, but the Apostles considered as the representatives and founders of the Church.

For each Christian the point of view changes, as it changes to a much greater extent for Christ Himself.

Although each of us is invited to act for the society, his action, being individual, has not the characters of the society.

We find ourselves thus brought back, with regard to symbols, to the symbols of strength and of the personal communication of the faith.

Now in a question of strength, athletics offer quite naturally the storehouse for comparisons. The ancient athlete anointed his body with oil, to strengthen it, to protect it, to make it supple in bodily contests. We admit anointing, and oil, which is its matter, as a sign of the strengthening of the faith and of preparation for Christian contests.

Once more, oil serves to give light and heat by its combustion, as the Holy Spirit enlightens the soul and renders it enlightening and burning for others.

Taken as it is from the sober and evergreen olive, it recalls the serious side of the Christian life, its vigilance, and the attentive providence which guides it, etc. The Fathers of the Church were never tired of developing these symbolisms. We are much less inclined to it to-day; but the general data subsist. In life symbolism has a permanent value which religious institutions had to consider.

With the same thought, but enlarged this time, since Christian virility must employ itself in aiding the life around it, to the oil of the strong we add balm, to signify that in the spiritual, the perfume which is spread abroad, that is, example, is a strength.

Our psychologists have shown this well enough. Example, by formulating in the writing of action that which was vaguely formulated in our soul, aids in its realisation. By imposing on the eyes, and thereby more or less on the heart, whatever risked being buried in the dormant conscience; by

veiling the rest; by justifying the hope of progress; by demonstrating as able to be done and a good thing to do that which it shows us as done, example overcomes hindrances and opens a road. It persuades the mind and the heart to make the inward sign which commits us to action.

Why should the Christian life neglect this strength? The *good odour of Christ,* as St. Paul says, when it emanates from a soul wherein Christ lives, is highly effective. The balm of the sacrament is a figure of it. And besides, in making use of this matter, we apply to the faithful the sign of the Cross, as we impose the sword or the banner on the knight, to invite him to fight for justice.

We mark him on the forehead, as being the most apparent and noble place, where is affirmed the firmness of his attitude, as it is there that is manifested, in case of weakness, either the blush of cowardice or the pallor of fear.

He who must not be ashamed of Christ, nor fear anything that separates one from Him, may well boldly bear on his forehead the sign of the Cross.

By these exterior signs the believer admits that God is present, introducing under the sign the reality that it proclaims so far as this reality depends on God, who stirs his heart without doing violence to his liberty.

This gift of God really acting in the soul is what is connected with the idea of the sacramental character, which must be understood as an interior facility which active good will is to employ. So the Apostles, at first timid and shut up in the Cenacle, make use of the gifts of the sanctifying Spirit by exposing themselves firstly in Jerusalem, and afterwards throughout the world, ready to brave all and to face all to preach Christ.

And we do not wait till the Christian has attained bodily to the age of a man to imprint this mark on him. The soul has no age. Considered in itself, it is above time, although it displays its manifestations in time. As, then, it can be reborn, according to the spirit, however old be its body; so it can become adult, according to the spirit, however young its body may be.

So we give confirmation to children. It is only necessary to wait until manifestations of interior grace, which are not confounded with grace itself, are proportioned to the age and circumstances.

Have we not, moreover, seen children conduct themselves in a more Christian manner than the greater number of adult believers?

What lessons our little ones give us, when their young hearts, already freed from unconsciousness and not yet delivered up to that egoistical scepticism wherewith we are

so often imbued, hasten generously to action or to the sacrifice!

The seven children of Felicitas, unflinching in spite of tongs and cauldrons, Tarsicius and so many of their less triumphant brethren might make those blush who are the victims of human respect, of that strange weakness which little by little invades watchful men, when, their initial eagerness departed, they do not know how to renew their strength by an intense Christian life.

To sum up, Confirmation presents itself as a complement of baptism, a completion, in the sense of a fulness which enables us to fight against obstacles and try to overcome them.

The confirmed Christian is a soldier; a citizen who doubly represents his country; inwardly, by the discipline which firmly obeys the social law; outwardly, by his fearless action.

Moreover, the minister of this sacrament is no longer the simple priest, or any Christian whatever, or even the unbeliever who unites himself to the Church by correct intention, as for Baptism; it is the Bishop, the supreme chief of each religious organisation, who intervenes in this as one whose action is completive. Like the general-in-chief who confirms an order of march; like the artist who retouches the marble, after the workman has cut it; like the chief of state, or the minister who signs the document prepared by the clerk.

We are, as St. Paul said, *a letter of Christ written . . . not with ink, but with the living Spirit of God: not on tablets of stone, but on the fleshy tablets of the heart.*

This letter, signed and sealed, is not for all that a finished writing. It is in great part a blank sheet. We must develop the formula of life which the hand of the Saviour has confirmed with His signature. It is the business of our whole life.

The confirmed Christian completes and begins; he completes the constitution of his inner life; it remains for him after that to live. His best means will be the Sacrament which nourishes, which contains, in a real though spiritual sense, spiritual Food personified, most high and noble, most sweet and efficacious—let us give Its name—the most Holy Eucharist.

CHAPTER IV

THE EUCHARIST

WE have now reached the centre of the sacramental life of the Church.

The Eucharist is the Sacrament *par excellence;* the first, as is very evident, in the intention of its Founder; the only one, it might be said; for all the others more or less directly depend on it; and, lastly, the one which holds such a rank in the constitution of the Church as to be, so to say, identified with it.

The starting-point of the sacramental idea is this: the regulation of the supernatural life according to the general laws of life. We find them in the life we know best, the physical life.

Now, in the physical life, nutrition, to which the Eucharist corresponds, is not only an important function, the principal function, inasmuch as our continued existence depends upon it; it is, in a certain fashion, the unique function.

All the physiologists tell us that assimilation is the fundamental process of life, to which everything leads up.

A birth is only the nutrition and segmentation of a germ, segmentation proceeding from nutrition as a derived phenomenon.

Any sort of growth is only a nutrition carried on by a differentiation according to the demands of an evolutive principle called soul. A functioning is only a nutrition revealed by a consecutive differentiation, which liberates force and uses it. Thus everything in the body is reduced to nutrition starting from a germ.

So all is reduced, in the spiritual, to the proper effect of the Eucharist.

There is this difference alone—a capital difference, it is true, and one which thus renders our comparison imperfect (are not all comparisons so, when it is question of matter and of spirit?)—namely, that physical nutrition absorbs the food into our bodies, changes it into us and not us into it. On the contrary, the Eucharistic food incorporates the Christian into Christ, in order to incorporate him with God. "Thou wilt not change Me into thyself," said Christ to St. Augustine; "But I will change thee into Myself."

This is the food which is strongest; living food, like a prey that devours its hunter; but in order to bear him up to a state of life transformed to which it is good to mount, since we do not grow, and do not even subsist, and cannot

live, eternal clients of death as we are, except on condition of laying hold of the Divine.

O ye who pass away, come to Him who abideth.

* * * * *

The effect of the Eucharist is then to feed the spiritual life in us. This is what is represented by the bread and wine that are its matter; this is what is indicated by the words of Jesus; *Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.*

And all the effects which food produces we attribute to the grace of the Eucharist.

The *support* of our life, which, without union with Christ, falls back into the manifold insufficiency which has made us require the religious bond to save us from the nothingness of man.

The *progress* of our life, which mounts so much the higher as it leans on the strength of God, on the universal value of His Christ, finding itself fed by the more and more intimate infiltrations of the Spirit which the contact of the Saviour infuses into us.

The *reparation* of our life, ceaselessly ambushed by mischance, which, in the physical sphere, is called sickness; accident, which, in the spiritual region, is called sin and the effects of sin; a moral wound, sickness of soul, which the spiritual food, becoming a remedy, heals. What is a *remedy* but a kind of food for the sick man, as food is a remedy for weakness and death?

Lastly, the *delight* which normal nourishment produces, normally absorbed, the Eucharist produces also as an effect of unifying love; of the love which is always a joy, because it responds to the twofold desire of our nature, to give and to give oneself; and so to receive, in order to enrich at the same time as to enlarge the field of one's being.

These four effects, accompanying the terrestrial traveller throughout his life, will urge him towards his destiny.

That which is sustained, progresses, is repaired, and enjoys with all its strength, is the thing which succeeds.

Carnal food, by itself, cannot carry us, even materially, where man is going. It combats death only provisionally. Nay, more, it carries death in itself, since, like the architect who would replace the stones of a house one by one, substituting new stones for them, but whose effort would overturn the foundations, food only repairs our organs by gradually destroying and wearing them out.

Alimentation is an exchange; it assimilates by dissolution, until by this action the organs are at last exhausted, and death, after being postponed for a while, seizes upon us.

The divine food does not proceed thus. It disintegrates nothing but evil; it makes us grow without ceasing, only urges us onward, and thus enables us to succeed. It triumphs over death, which has no hold on the life of the spirit, and, by uniting the spirit to God, will one day regenerate the body too.

I am the Resurrection and the Life, said the Saviour. *He that believeth in Me, though he be dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever.*

That is why He contrasts the food which He gives, and which is Himself, with the poor aliments of the body, saying: *My Flesh is meat* INDEED, *and My Blood is drink* INDEED.

Carnal food is nothing more than a tottering stay, which at the first shock gives way with the house itself.

The Eucharistic food keeps us *unto eternal life.* He who receives its effect and does not thwart it with a sinful will conquers death. What is called by this name continues to perform its action; but its scythe cuts no longer, and the goad with which it urges succeeding generations towards the tomb is too dull for further victories: *Ubi est, mors, victoria tua: ubi est stimulus tuus?*

Nor is this all: it is not even the main thing, for us who wish to see in the sacraments, not the individual life of the Christian, but the life of the Church.

The Eucharist is not a solely individual rite. Those who think so do not know it. Those who act as if it were only draw from it a partial fruit. It might be said that they draw from it nothing at all, if their good and cramped intention does not outrange their vision in their own despite.

The Eucharist is meant to incorporate us with Christ, and must incorporate us with Christ as He is, and Christ is not a solely individual being. He is an individual so given up to His office that He becomes identified with it and becomes a universal Being. He is the *Son of Man.* We only become incorporated with Him on condition of becoming united in Him to all men; of becoming united to them through love, which is the principle of all; of becoming united in love also, and through love by the organisation of our life in common which is the end of the Church.

This is far from a purely individual act.

Nothing is exclusively individual in Catholic life. We have seen that Baptism is a social act, as an incorporation into the religious society which has Christ for its Head and His Spirit for its common soul; that Confirmation is a social act, as the sacrament of strength and of fitness for spiritual contests, from which the society reaps the benefit. The Eucharist is the most social as well as the most intimately

personal of all the sacraments, because it is the sacrament of love.

Through it man unites himself to Christ, and unites himself to all that Christ has united to Himself. He receives Him together with His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity; but by remembering that His Body has been broken and His Blood shed for all men; that He is Brother of all in soul, preoccupied with the good of all, looking after the destinies of all, and that the God that this universal Man is going to make ours is the mysterious bond of all men, the common foundation, transcendent and immanent both, of all beings.

It is indeed this which is also implied in the Eucharistic symbolism, as the Apostles understood it. *We are but one bread, all we who partake of the same bread and of the same cup.* This image is clear. The matter of the Eucharist is a synthesis of elements which come together in unity. The bread is made of the multitude of grains which the flour mingles and the fire unites; the wine, of the multitude of grapes which the vat gathers together and fermentation unites into one. It is the symbol of Christians united to Christ, the living Leaven of the human lump.

Besides, the use of common food under the form of a banquet accentuates the symbolism and widens it, by disengaging it from all subtlety. The banquet is the symbol *par excellence* of life in common. The family table is the centre and rallying-point of all the lives which the *black beam* overhangs, as the Greeks said in speaking of the family. The table is the sign of union, and it helps to maintain it. Thus the Eucharist, the Christian holy banquet and family board, makes the bond of souls and presents itself as a fraternal sign between us.

I fancy that this is what the Saviour meant when He sat at table with the Twelve to institute the Eucharist, and said with a loving sigh: *With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you.* It is because this new Pasch signified and tended to realise what He had come to effect, the union of all men in Himself, to make a single family with God as its Father of infinite wealth.

If now we remember that the unity to be established among us is not just any kind of unity, a purely sentimental unity; that it is a functional unity, an organic and organised life, a real *society,* which is the Church, a society ruling us in spiritual matters as the State does in temporal: if we recall, I say, this fundamental truth, we shall come to say that the fruit of the Eucharist is, as theologians say, *the oneness of the mystical body of Christ, i.e.,* its fruit is our religious constitution itself.

In speaking thus we seem to be hair-splitting, whereas we are really just touching upon one of the finest and profoundest points of Catholic theology.

I have already remarked that the Eucharist is fundamentally identified with the Church. And now I prove it by saying that the purposed end of the Eucharist is to unite us to Christ, all of us together, not as a stray flock, but so connected with one another as befits our nature, with respect to the supernatural, *i.e.*, so far as we form the Church.

The Church united by the cement of charity to its Christ first of all, and thus member to member according to the laws of organic life, thanks to the spirit of Christ, which is love and which is life; such is the effect we expect from the Eucharist. All its individual effects are derived from this. To believe the contrary, and that the Church will constitute itself in love because individuals have first of all drawn from Christ individual effects to be socialised, would be pure Protestantism.

Catholics say that the society comes first; that the society is the creative thing in relation to the individual.

The communicant can only get individual effects when he communicates with the society by communicating with Christ as He is, as *the universal Man;* by accepting the love which unites him to Christ as He is, as if He were *an organic law* producing the whole religious organisation; for Christ as He is is both of these.

To this we must always return; for it is the foundation of all Catholic doctrine.

No individual draws from Christ, and through Him from God, outside of whom there is nothing, otherwise than as the leaf draws from the earth, by means of the branches, the trunk and the roots; according to the organic law of the tree, in union with the general laws of all life.

To wish to be united with Christ by isolating Him, or by isolating oneself (for He does not permit Himself to be isolated from His work) would be to be the leaf which, so as to draw from the earth the saps which nourish it, should tear itself from the tree and lie on the soil. What would it find there but abandonment and death?

Hence arises that conception already hinted at, which even great theologians have not understood, but which was familiar to St. Thomas Aquinas; namely, that in a certain manner the Eucharist is the sole sacrament. Not that it suppresses the others; but it subordinates them to itself and appoints itself their end. They are only its porch.

As in our Christian churches everything turns towards the tabernacle; the naves lead to it, the apses crown it, the

domes overhang it, the coloured windows focus the light of heaven upon it, the lofty pillars increase its glory, the statues follow in its train, the cruciform shape of the building recalls the sacrifice from which it came; so, in spiritual realities, all comes from the presence of Christ in the midst of us, all comes sacramentally from the special rite which gives Him to us, which gives Him to us, I say, in His own proper nature, the other sacraments doing nothing but forming channels for His action.

It might be said, and St. Thomas did actually say, that every sacrament is only a desire for the Eucharist; a real desire, to which is united, explicitly or implicitly, the personal desire of the recipient, seeing that every desire or every efficacious action is only such through Him who is present in it, and who is our All. Glowing and vivifying Sun, around which revolves the religious world which carries us with it; sublime Pelican, which each day smites its breast to nourish us with its substance; Head of the race, immortal and ever active, whom the mysterious Eucharistic sleep renders fruitful, as, in the rod of Jesse, the patriarch sleeping and dreaming of a numberless progeny saw its twigs bud, shepherds and kings arising from its open side.

In this image, if it were thoroughly examined, we should find a thought which would put the final touch to this hasty sketch.

The genealogical tree, which spreads out with the number of generations, grows taller too with the fulness of the time that measures them. So Christ, our eternal Ancestor, includes time in His action, as He includes the multitude of men.

And as the multitude of men is organic through Him in the Church; so is the fulness of time organic through Him, comprising the distant preparations of His temporal life, His life and His Sacrifice, the growth of His work through the centuries, and finally the future, which rejoins the eternity out of which the past arose.

Now this cycle of time is figured in the Eucharist and is found in its effects.

Relatively to the past, the Eucharist is the commemoration, and still more, the mystic renewal of the Saviour's Passion and its universal preparations; by reason of which it is called a *sacrifice*. Many people do not know the ample meanings of what we call the Mass.

Relatively to the present, it signifies and tends to realise progressively the unity of Christians in Christ and in His Spirit, and therefore it is called *communion*. The Greeks say σύναξις, assembly, intimate union.

Relatively to the future, it presages, prepares and antici-

pates the final union of the elect with God, through Christ, in the eternal Church, and it is therefore called a *viaticum.* The word *Eucharist,* which signifies *thanksgiving* or *happy grace,* relates also to this prospective fulfilment, although it applies equally to its harbingers.

The sacrament of the altar directs us also towards the last end of man's destiny. It is the sacrament of life; but of true life, which only gives an earnest here, which extends its empire beyond death.

We go to the Eucharist as to the sacred booking-office where we are given our ticket for starting, while waiting till our time is up.

The old Israelites had to eat the pasch hastily, staff in hand, loins girt, sandals on feet, and standing; for the pasch, for them, signified the *passage.* And we also pass. But our passage is not the drop into the dark pictured by the disturbed imagination of the living; it is the exchange of one homeland for a better and a final home; of an interior life constrained, sad, and terribly transient, for a life eternal and complete, of a relative union of human beings bound together by love for a perfect union which no separation hereafter can ever unbind.

CHAPTER V

PENANCE

THE three sacraments which we have studied are the transposition into the supernatural of these three vital functions: birth, growth, nutrition.

And since this last is the fundamental fact of life, we have said that the Eucharist, which corresponds to it, is, in a manner, the sole sacrament, to which all the others are subordinated and in which they are included.

These three sacramental actions, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, corresponding to normal and universal functions, must be considered as necessary *per se,* and on any hypothesis.

Not that salvation is in fact absolutely bound up with them; but normally they are imposed. So is the Christian life constituted.

Penance, on the other hand, the fourth of our sacraments, is necessary on occasion, after the manner of a medicine, which does not enter into the normal functioning of life, but comes to its aid in case of suffering or deterioration on the part of the organism. Unhappily, since such accidents are for us all of daily occurrence, penance also will be necessary on a larger or smaller scale.

In what kind of deterioration the sacrament of penance comes to our aid; how it repairs our wounds, and what is the rôle of the Church in the matter, are the questions to be dealt with.

Since our spiritual life consists in a life with God, through Christ and through the Church of Christ, every infraction of the law of this common life tends to separate us from its operation and to deprive us of its fruits.

Sin, as the infringement of the Christian law is called, makes us as it were sick members of the spiritual organism, the Church; and if it be grave, dead members, dead cells.

And as in an organism every weakening or mortification of an organ, a member, any part whatever, concerns *firstly,* the part itself, which no longer lives, no longer benefits by the vital activity; *secondly,* all the others, which are all affected by reason of the body's solidarity, wherefore physicians say that every malady is a general malady; *thirdly,* the soul, which can no longer, in the organism thus deteriorated, reveal its powers and perform its task: so, in the spiritual organism, every mortification of a member through mortal sin and every weakening through venial sin concerns *firstly,* the particular member, which no longer lives or whose life

is diminished, which obtains not at all or at any rate obtains less, in this world and the other, the result of religious activity; *secondly,* the whole Church, not only by reason of the moral contagion that is always possible, but also by its direct solidarity, since the Church suffers in each of its members as much as the body; *thirdly,* God, whose Spirit is the soul of the Church; who realises through the Church His ends in man's regard, and can no longer do so when and in the measure that its members withdraw themselves by sin from under the law of life which He guides.

Thus, the sinner is found to be blameworthy in regard of himself, of the Church, and of God.

If he is to recover, it can only be by a spontaneous act, by an intervention of the Church, and by an intervention of God.

No medicine will act on a member of the body unless the member in question reacts through its forces of life to free itself from the malady.

Nor will it act unless the organic solidarity interests the whole body in this recuperation of one of its members.

Nor will it act lastly—and this is the most important of the conditions—unless the spirit or directive idea of life called the soul makes itself the agent of the recuperation, as it has been the agent of the making, the growth and the nutrition of the organism.

The actions performed by the penitent, *contrition, confession, satisfaction,* make up what we have called the organic reaction, through which the man whom evil has overcome seeks to free himself therefrom.

Pardon and the restoration of grace are the share of God, who suggests and accepts the effort of recuperation.

Lastly, the intervention of the priest as *judge,* as minister of *absolution,* as the determiner of *satisfaction,* is the part of the Church, in whose name the priest exercises his authority.

This is what is signified in a few words by the formula of absolution, I ABSOLVE THEE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Thou who repentest; thou who accusest thyself; thou who offerest reparation; I, minister of Christ and of the Church which is His Body, I absolve thee. Not of my own authority; what am I, a sinner like thyself, even to hear thee, in a matter of conscience, far less to absolve thee? I absolve thee *in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;* in the Name of Him who is the Source of that life which thou hast lost or which is languishing in thee; who is the soul of the body that we form in Christ; who restores to thee, through me and through thy own acts, the mysterious

influence of life called grace, the hope of life's manifestation called glory.

The effect of penance is thus revealed by its purpose and by the machinery which we have just attributed to it.

It re-establishes the sinner in grace.

It restores to him his rights as a son.

It reconciles him not only with God, but also with the society of his brethren, the Christians united with Christ, which he had left.

It restores him to the Kingdom of Heaven, which is earthly as much as it is heavenly.

It reintegrates him in the unity of the mystical body and plunges him once more into the current of life whereof God is the principle; whereof Christ is the intermediary through His merits; whereof the Church is the channel, and whereof we are all at the same time collaborators and beneficiaries.

There are people who find this degrading!

One cannot read an anticlerical work without finding fulminations against the odious confessional, declarations of the opposition between the contrite attitude of the penitent and the proud demeanour of the free man.

Free from what? we venture to demand. Free from remorse? Free from virtuous regret for his faults? Free from attachments to the Eternity that judges us? Free from realisation of that universal solidarity which makes every individual value a common treasure, but also of each individual fault the disgrace and shame of all?

If it is of this that the "free man" is proud, we can only say that he has no reason for his pride. But confession presupposes the very opposite to such feelings. Those who come with a great heart to it realise this. Those who come with a poor one must rise to the level of the institution. That would be better than abusing or misunderstanding it.

On the side of man, penance appears as an act of justice which the penitent exercises against himself. He is not dragged to the tribunal; he comes freely. Knowing that sin is an evil, he purposes to abolish it, and *contrition* is the soul of the act of justice he thus performs. Contrition is, as St. Thomas so well defines it, "a sorrow for our faults together with the will to destroy them."

To this end, the sinner, not content with an interior repentance, which is, it is true, the most important thing, performs an act which is intended to prove the quality of his repentance, since he puts it to a proof directly proportioned to the offence.

He has offended God; to God he makes his address.

He has been untrue to himself, to the self for which he is responsible and which he has led astray. He turns back, pledging himself by a real act, more decisive than a simple interior act; more capable of breaking off with a clean cut that automatism to which the Scripture makes allusion in the words: *He that committeth sin becomes the servant of sin.*

Lastly, he has brought an element of corruption and disturbance into the holy society of souls; he declares before an authorised representative of this society that he is ready to restore order in it; to satisfy the mercifully slight demands of loving justice.

I confess to God almighty, to Blessed Mary ever a Virgin, to St. Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John Baptist, to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the Saints, to all that is pure, all that is great, all that is united with God in holy association, that I, sinner that I am, have broken the agreement; that I have forgotten what bound me to that common life in God which we call the Christian life; that I have behaved like one who no longer believes, no longer loves, no longer hopes, and who seeks his pasturage of worldly pleasure, pride, avarice, anger, where good reigns not, and despises the bread of which the Saviour spoke, *the will of His Father.*

Through my own fault, through my own fault, through my own very great fault. Wherefore I beseech the Blessed Mary, ever a Virgin . . . and the whole line of saints once more, all those who are united to the great eternal family, *and you, Father,* who represent it by the fact of institution, *to pray the Lord our God for me.*

If there is anything low about this, let us be glad often to renew this lowness!

I quite understand that what jars here is this intervention of other persons in the sphere of our conscience. But we cannot be in the least disposed to condemn penance on this point; for it is precisely from this aspect that confession enters into our study, and makes evident what is our continual preoccupation, the collective character of the religious bond, and its organisation as the Church.

Penance, we say, is a sacrament; that is, it is an external and operative sign; a sign of repentance on the part of the penitent, and of pardon on that of God.

It is a sacrament of the Church, that is, a social act. And the act is social under two aspects; for the penitent must recognise the right of the collective body to judge him, since it is through this collective body united to Christ that he is in relation with God, his judge, God in turn being in saving relation with him through the same social means, namely,

Christ, who is mediator for all; through the Church which continues Him, extends His action to us, applies to us His merits, in accordance with the law established at the beginning when He said: *Whatsoever thou* (Peter) *shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.* And to all: *Whose sins you remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins ye retain, they are retained.*

Pascal remarks very justly that at bottom we owe our confessions to all men; "for," says he, "is it just that we should deceive them?" Social life is based on confidence, and so on truth, and so on veracity. We cannot lawfully desire more consideration than by our acts we deserve. And again, if confession is the first of reparations, since in offending against the good whereon a spiritual society is founded we have offended against the society, we owe the avowal of our faults to all its members.

The public penance of the early Christians owed its existence to this way of thinking. At all times of its maintenance it was only demanded for certain crimes, and it was speedily given up by reason of the inconveniences relating to our common wretchedness; but the absolute right has not perished; our belief in *general judgement* recalls it and applies it. Meanwhile, a prudent and merciful arrangement satisfies in principle the social character of the fault by requiring secret confession to a representative in place of that public penance which prudence has put aside.

There is then no question of conferring on a man a sort of divine character; but we assert that the divine, here as everywhere, is mixed with the human, and that the divine, in dealing with matters in its own realm, must pass through the human, in order to reach us in accordance with the laws that govern man and so that it may be useful to man.

If we had started this chapter by pointing out the usefulness of confession as such, we could show that rationalist ideas in this connection are governed by a thoughtlessness which psychology does not approve; that the greatest minds have made their way into daylight, and have recognised confession to be an institution whose inspiration is as deep as its intention is moral.

This method of stopping the flow of evil by setting in its path a real and visible dyke, which invites to interior reaction by means suitable to the half automatic, half conscious functioning of the human species; which uses the social in favour of the moral; which compels each of us to reflect on and to specify his case, because he has to explain it; which sets sin before us in full daylight, instead of in the vague shadows where it loves to linger in order to live; which makes us

judge the evil all the more inasmuch as we are conscious that it is judged by another; which despoils it of its charms and gives it up to its malice considered by two people alone; which procures for us before the invisible and dumb Eternity the feeling that we are heard, pardoned and encouraged for the future; which thus gives us that consolation, the absence of which causes discouragement and despair, that we have before us a blank sheet whereon we can henceforth write a holy text: this method, too, of adding friendship and brotherliness to the judgement of the soul, since the confessor makes himself our counsellor, support, consoler, provided only that he knows his own office and that we know ourselves to be in need of his aid; all this belongs, perchance, to a strain in human nature deeper than does the Protestants' confession to God alone; deeper, even more certainly it may be said, than does confession to nobody, on the pretext of preserving independence and pride.

It is usual to attribute the effects of sacramental penance to the Passion of Christ, because this universal act counterbalances, and does infinitely more than counterbalance the burden of human malice.

The crucified Saviour, the first link, human and also divine, of the chain that binds us to the Author of Salvation, re-establishes the contact when sin has intervened to interrupt it.

The old mystics said that from His opened Side Christ poured forth Water and Blood, symbols of purification and of love; Baptism and Penance on the one part, the Eucharist on the other. It was one way of expressing the fact that the Church and the sacramental functioning of the Church are a continuation of the Saviour who merits for all, and the social form of an action which in Him was only apparently individual, since He is the universal Man, the security for the whole race, by that merciful agreement freely instituted under the name of the *New Testament*.

All our doctrines hold together. The sacrament of penance is only a particular case, applicable to the sinner, of that common life in Christ whose formula we have given.

The theologians of the Middle Ages called penance a second plank after shipwreck; *secunda tabula post naufragium*. The first plank which bore the traveller was the ship's deck, whereon with all his brethren he sailed towards eternal life. Shipwrecked by his sin, the path to the haven forsaken, the penitent sees stretched towards him the helpful plank of the sacrament, which reaches out from the vessel and offers itself to him, by means of which he can regain the collective transport and continue his journey.

From the fact that penance is thus a help in accident, or,

to take up once more our first metaphor, a medicine, it follows that it can be repeated as often as it is necessary.

The heretics of olden time who did not believe in the necessity or the possibility of several pardons, in the course of a man's life, hardly understood either the human heart, since they thought it guaranteed against relapses, or the heart of God, since they thought that one day could exhaust Its mercies.

We know how miserably weak man is; but we know too that the strength of God is greater than man's weakness and that He is more tender than man is perverse.

The mercies of the Lord are a multitude, says the Psalm.

And this though Cain, the despairing, may say : *My iniquity is too great for me to receive pardon,* or though Judas find only the halter to free him from his crime.

A son of Christ, though he sin often, never becomes desperate. He has read the parable of the Prodigal Son. He knows that the Father waits, when we think we must ask life apart from Him to provide us with joy, until life has answered in one way or another through conscience or disappointment : I am not thy God. And He, who is that God, the only hope of true life for us, and particularly of eternal life, will come, we know, before we repent, in search of the soul, and will clothe the sinner, as of old, in the white robe, with the ring of reconciliation, the sandals that protect his wounded feet, and will restore to him his place at the family banquet for which the fatted calf will be slain in sign of festivity, where the joyous song will be heard : *For this my son was lost, and is found.*

The heavenly Father is always ready to pardon the eternal inexperience of earth. His hand takes once more the feeble hand which thinks itself able to do without Him. His shoulder is bent so that the weary head of mortal man may rest there. In His sacramental silence, or in the murmur of the priest who absolves in His name, we can hear, applied to guilty as well as to innocent misfortune, the words which our sweet Master pronounced of old : *Come to Me, all ye who labour and are burdened with the weight of life, and I will refresh you.*

CHAPTER VI

EXTREME UNCTION

THE fundamental idea which is at the basis of the sacraments now receives, in the individual field, a last application which is not the least affecting, although it is ordinarily the least indispensable.

It is the business of the sacraments to come to our aid in all the circumstances of the spiritual life; circumstances which are in part connected with, and which are always parallel to those of bodily life.

As Baptism corresponds to birth, Confirmation to growth, the Eucharist to nourishment, Penance to the healing of such evil as may befall us, so Extreme Unction is the sacrament of the supreme evil, that which, at least according to the fears of the living, borders upon that state of the dead which is a life, but which is no longer a life with which the sacraments are concerned.

We have said that the sacraments come to the aid of man as he is in time; body and soul, and by making use of the body. When the body is given back to the universal life, the life of the soul is pursued and the Christian brotherhood is able to reach it by means of prayer; but the sacraments cannot reach it; it has entered, beyond the realms of time and space, and consequently beyond the reach of visible actions, where the spirit can only go by itself.

Extreme Unction, then, is the supreme intervention, in favour of one who is departing, of the society united in Christ and in God which we call the Church.

It is the sacrament of departure, if the recipient really is to depart; in any case, of what living Christians regard as the gravest of dangers, requiring a special help, which Mother Church is bound to provide. To the man whose life is fading from him, and whose soul, made for God, seems to bend towards the abyss of light

> Like thirsting beast that bends above the stream,

must not the Church afford the helps which will assist him to purify himself, to hope, to repair his strength for the great crossing?

Death is an event, as we have said, like any other; it transfers us and does not destroy us. This is indeed true; but it is true only of our spirit. But we are not spirit alone; we are a compound; incarnate soul, animated flesh, and therefore it is our being that becomes dissociated when vital functions are no longer possible and the elements that it governed are scattered, leaving the real idea which we call

the soul to its pure ideality; a thing that belongs to man, but not man.

Now, it is hard to see the dissociation of one's being, even though it be for the survival of one's higher self.

To be poured out into the mysterious, even though it be illuminated by that "dim light" which our faith affords us: light for the consciousness, which trusts to it and confides in it; dimness for the intuition, which is bewildered by the total absence of all that constitutes experience, not only actual experience, but even possible experience—to be poured out thus into the fulness of the mysterious is a disturbing thought.

And is it not also disquieting to know that Justice as well as Love is sitting at the gate of the other world, and that *no man knows,* as the Apostle says, at any rate with a direct certitude that is capable of putting to rest every apprehension, *whether he be worthy of love or hate?*

And so religion comes to bring its help to the man that is at some uncertain moment to die. It expresses this help by means of a rite whose symbolism is borrowed in part from that of confirmation, because of the similarity of the case; but with special features, and in a way that takes account of the differences.

The matter of the sacrament is oil; the athlete's refreshment for final contest; the medicine for the soul grieving and never free from sin; the source of heat and light for the soul benumbed and groping on the edge of the great, half-open abyss.

By its penetrating and diffusive action, oil speaks of the depth and universality of the spiritual effect which it is desired to exercise in this fearful extremity. By its softness it recalls that hope which is so necessary at the moment of coming face to face with the eternal silence.

The anointings are performed on those parts of the body which may represent the principle of the moral miseries from which it is desired to deliver us, even as a bodily remedy endeavours to reach the root of the evil.

But the roots of sin are, unfortunately, the very roots of our action. Everything can be abused. Life, which is a divine benefit, can become in its entirety a source of vice or misery. That is why the sacrament aims at purifying, firstly our instruments of knowledge, secondly our motive powers, thirdly our executive powers.

The eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands, the principal or the exclusive organs of our senses; the feet, which signify outward action; the loins, which recall the impulses of our senses, are touched with the symbol accompanied by this prayer: *By this holy unction and of His most tender mercy may God pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by the eyes, the ears, the tongue,* etc.

We use the form of a prayer because we have to do with one who is without strength and who cannot therefore help himself; because the dying man has, as it were, already departed, delivered into the hands of God, where prayer alone can follow him.

This is indeed the moment for imploring mercy, this moment of supreme anguish, when the shut eyes are without doubt about to close altogether before opening on a better light.

When we depart, all covered with the dust of action, with the spatterings of life that has dragged us constantly through its mire, with the wounds we have sustained in our fight for good; struggles all too weak, indeed, but never entirely relinquished, what should we call upon if not the mercy of the eternal Samaritan, who knows our paths and who has so closely measured our strength?

Agnosce, Domine, creaturam tuam non a diis alienis creatam. . . . Remember, O Lord, that Thy creature who lieth here *has been formed by no other hands than Thine. . . . Remember not then his old sins, nor the excesses to which anger or the fervour of an evil will have led him. For though he has sinned, yet he has not denied Thee,* God of all that is *good: He has believed in Thee and has had a zeal for Thy work.*

So sigh the prayers of the dying, the accompaniment and commentary of extreme unction. So thinks the minister who is present to act in the name of the Church.

And even if he himself, distracted and a little blunted by his daily repetition of the same rites, does not often enough think thus, yet it does not follow that nothing results from his action, though it has thus become hackneyed.

The minister is not alone. He counts only by reason of his place in the hierarchy, and that is the least. He has above him the whole hierarchy, represented by the Bishop when he blesses the oil of unction. And the hierarchy itself, in so far as it is visible, is only the living symbol of the eternal hierarchy of souls, which is the true Church; the Church over which Christ presides; which the Holy Spirit penetrates; which includes all ages, all places, all races, all beliefs that excite virtue and are lived, all that interior Kingdom of God which the Apostles called the Elect, because it is what counts in respect of eternal life.

It is this holy society which is acting here, in the name of the solidarity of which the God-Man made part and which is invoked by conscious or mute suffering.

It is the prayer of this united group which is here condensed, if we may so say, in the symbolic element which is employed, in the actions and words which employ it.

It is the whole band of the elect of all times which,

arranged in its hierarchy and knowing that God is at its head, bends over its suffering child and brother.

When the great Pascal wrote those terrible words "A man dies alone," he was thinking of the associates or accomplices of a wanton life. They indeed, when death lays its hand on us, disappear as if they belonged to another world; they can do nothing for us, and we die alone, without such deceptive supports. But the Christian solidarity established in God through Christ and through His immortal Church death does not touch. The dead and the living pray for us, when we suffer or die in communion with them in the Lord.

The sacrament, given in the Lord's Name by those who represent the society, signifies and applies this prayer; the sufferer receives its effect as to the soul, to the extent that he is disposed thereto, and as to the body, to the extent that Providence allows.

Indeed, the sacrament of extreme unction has a double purpose. It does not signify a departure, and those are quite wrong who regard the man in the cassock as a bird of mourning who brings news of separation. He is a physician; a physician of soul and of body, as the other kind of physician, if he knows his business well, is a physician of body and soul.

What the Church brings to the sick man is a help, and her motherly care, though concerned about souls before all things else, yet does not fail of interest either in our bodies, nor above all in our feelings, which at a deathbed are so oppressed.

As to the soul, the proper office of extreme unction is not the remission of sin; that is supposed to have been already acquired by the sacrament of penance, which normally precedes anointing. Penance delivers us from evil, and principally from that evil which breaks our bond of friendship with God; mortal sin. Thereby it is a sort of spiritual resurrection. Extreme unction, although accidentally it may play the same rôle, like a tonic which sometimes acts as a remedy, is yet not directly ordained therefor. It aims at what are called in theology *the remains of sin,* that is, the moral weakness which sin drags in its wake.

It is the sacrament for those who are convalescent in soul, who have need of relief all the more prompt because their body is in danger. In order to win eternal youth, it is necessary that we should appear before God healed of evil.

Now what the person in good health could do by his own virtuous efforts, prayer and collective action are asked to do in this case. Extreme unction is specially a social succour, for the benefit of the man who cannot supply individual action.

And so it is not given to persons condemned to death, nor to soldiers in extreme danger, nor, in general, to those who

are about to die, but are not weakened and as it were snatched from themselves by the half-death of sickness.

Such folk as these have other succours with which they can themselves co-operate. They confess, they make their communion, or they supply by an interior act what these sacraments afford us.

But the sick man is expectant, and his brotherly expectation sees a brotherliness as wide as our universal Church, as tender as the soul of Christ and as mighty as God, coming to meet it.

With regard to the body, the sacramental prayer asks for healing, and it would expect it, as it expects a spiritual effect, with entire confidence, did it not know that that result, like all things temporal, does not provide an opportunity—anyhow if we are wise—for a firm request.

There are things, says St. Augustine, which God would grant us in His anger, and refuses in His mercy.

God's mercy walks in other paths than ours.

He who knows the supreme goal of life can alone regulate the means to that great end. The sacrament, which operates through Him, and not like a healing machine, heals if He finds it well; consoles, if His steadfast goodness wills it; and if that be better in the long run, leaves the poor chrysalis to crumble into dust, so that the immortal butterfly may be freed.

We have always to be leaving and seeing others leave. It is fitting that we should make a sacrifice of our death and its accompanying sufferings, sufferings in ourselves, sufferings even more in those who are around us than in ourselves, to be joined with that of the Saviour; who saves us with it from true death, and assists us through it to save the world.

In extreme unction, then, we find a new manifestation of Christian solidarity which, possessing God in itself through Christ, hastens, bearing its gifts, wherever its action is seen to be needed.

That solidarity it is which enables us to be born in Christ; that it is which helps us to die, in order that we may live again.

Christ risen from the dead dies no more; the Christian, conformed to Him in all the phases of a destiny that is henceforth a common one, dies no more than He. Extreme unction seals him for the existence that has no end and which allows neither of separation nor of suffering.

This is the last sacramental office which the Church performs in regard of the individual.

We must now provide for the recruiting of our religious hierarchy and of our societies of immortals by means of the two sacraments of Holy Order and Matrimony.

CHAPTER VII

HOLY ORDER

GOD'S creation requires not only beings but also actions, and in these actions an hierarchy, thanks to which the goods of Providence flow from their causes to their effects, like the water in the irrigation channels of man's making.

In religion, the beauty of order is introduced by what is called precisely *Order,* namely, the ordained hierarchy which communicates the effects of redemption to the faithful, after they have entered into the holy society of souls to become united to God.

Some people protest against this organisation, and prefer a religious individualism which we have already encountered several times on our path. At each encounter the motive of our opposition to it remains the same.

Those who see an encumbrance or undue subjection in the fact of an hierarchy whose office it is to act in ordinary circumstances as the channel of graces, have not reflected carefully on the nature of human life.

"How many men there are between God and myself!" cried Rousseau. He might have said this of temporal things too. How many men it takes to communicate to me the benefits of nature, of the race, of my country, of all that is human! I am placed in the world, I am nourished, I am educated, I am instructed, I am governed, I am served through all sorts of intermediaries of whose service I am only too happy to avail myself if I consider the matter.

The same law applies in the spiritual realm. It is but good sense. We may add that it is a necessity, if it is true that the supernatural borrows its conditions of functioning from nature, as well as its support and its starting-point, by simply transposing them.

The sacrament of Orders, then, like the anointing of kings, is a sensible sign and an act of *real* attribution of power;[1] but a spiritual power, a participation in that spiritual kingship which Christ exercises as the universal Man, the channel and the meritorious source of graces.

Its sensible sign is differently constituted in accordance with the different orders; but they all have this in common,

[1] The *character* impressed by this sacrament is called by theologians a real power of sacramental action, as the *character* of baptism is a real power of sacramental passivity. Without baptism no other sacrament can be received; without orders no other can be conferred, at least of those which imply a hierarchy. Baptism is an exception, since it can be conferred by anyone, by reason of its imperative necessity.

that the consecrator marks the power which he intends to confer by the tradition of the religious objects which are used by it; the chalice with wine, the paten with bread for the priesthood; the Gospel-Book for the diaconate; the empty chalice for the subdiaconate; and so on.

To the symbols are added words which express in the imperative the use of these things : *Take thou authority,* etc. . . .

The imperative formula is introduced, and the omission of the ordinary clause, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* is decreed, in order to indicate that the power of order emanates really from him who confers it, instead of its being the case, as it is in the other sacraments, that the minister is only a channel of influence, who neither possesses nor can possess what he communicates.

From the fact that the sacrament of Orders is thus destined to continue Christ and to direct the action of Christ, it follows that its principal object will be to ensure among us that real presence of Christ in which we have seen the centre of the whole of the sacramental life of the Church.

The Eucharist is not only the principal sacrament; it is in a sense, as we have said, the sole sacrament, inasmuch as it contains what every other sacrament is only a vehicle for putting in action.

To constitute a hierarchy, therefore, in order to communicate the Saviour's sanctifying action, is before all else to establish a power of consecrating the Eucharist; it is to establish a *priesthood* in the proper sense of the word.

All the orders inferior to the priesthood, the diaconate, the sub-diaconate, the minor orders, are only servants. All the higher powers, the episcopacy, prelatures of every rank, the papacy, are only servants also, though in another way.

These continuations in two directions can easily be explained. The fulfilling of such an office as the priesthood, which supposes preparatory, concomitant and subsequent circumstances, or in a word manifold conditions, has need of an organisation. It needs heads who first of all may determine those who are to exercise the power of order; who will afterwards control them; not in their principal office, which is the action of consecration, but in the use that is made of it, in the preparations and exterior conditions it supposes.

The Bishop, or High Priest, as he was called in the old Law, himself a priest, will exercise this power.

We say of him that he possesses the fulness of the priesthood, in order to express that his function, inasmuch as he is a priest, besides being complete, is independent, and that he communicates it to others by ordination. In the same way the living creature who no longer depends on his begetter and who can beget on his own behalf is said to have the plenitude of life.

Above the Bishop, above the various prelatures which are evidently servants, there is the Pope, and the Pope is a Bishop like any other Bishop, from the point of view of his power of Order; but he has in addition a universal jurisdiction, that is, a power of government which is itself also relative to the preparations and outward conditions of sacramental action.

Since the Church is one sole body, and unity can only be obtained in a social body by means of a central power which unites all particular powers in the search for a common end, the government of the apostolic see is indispensable, and those who refuse to be subject to it are rightly called schismatics, since they are enemies of religious unity.

But it remains that every power, even the Pope's; every office, whether administrative, or apparently political, or properly and visibly religious, must gravitate around the priesthood, because everything gravitates around the Eucharist. And this, in its turn, is explained by the fact that Christ, who is the substance of the Eucharist, is the whole of our life in God; the universal Means, the sole Source of light, of vital enrichment, of joy.

As the lines of our religious architectures all go straight to the tabernacle, and there curve into each other in order to surround it, disappear to make room for it, ascend to let its fire soar upwards, descend into hollow crypts that it may thrust its roots down deeper, return to swell the curve of a column so that again a pointing finger may be directed towards it; and, in short, seem to outgrow its dimensions in every direction, to flee from it, to forget it, to dominate it, but only so as to be subservient to it; thus all Christian authority, Pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, honorary prelates, foreign nuncios, canons, parish priests, abbots mitred or not mitred, and below the simple priest, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, readers, exorcists, porters, all, higher or lower, priests or not, are for the priest's service. Not, it is true, for the service of his person, but of his office, since the universal Church itself is only a collective priest, the spiritual body of Christ the priest, whose Heart, the living ciborium, offers us the Divinity.

Here we can see how mistaken are they who see in the Church only an administration, a political system, a society for temporal ends.

In the definition we have given of the sacrament of Orders, we can lay hold of the real essence of the Church, whose forms are established by this sacrament.

It is a mystical essence at bottom; administration and politics, which are joined to it through the necessity of its functioning among men, being only servants of the mystical

reality which is its soul, as in the living being, to use the metaphor whereto we always come back, the physico-chemical, and even more the mechanical reactions, are servants of the vital idea.

The Church desires to make us divine; for that end it makes use of a living Means, the Christ. Where the Christ is, then, there is what is essential to its rôle, the principle of its organisation, the vital nucleus where all its movements are co-ordinated.

Let all function according to the law of its institution, and we see the whole hierarchy, from top to bottom, from right to left, in all its ramifications and degrees, employed in one sole work; sanctification through Christ, with the Eucharist, which gives us Christ substantially, as its centre of influence.

We know only too well that a thousand deviations can always be introduced to interfere with this law. When we make use of man, we must expect his humanity soon to make itself felt. But the theory that governs a living being is not the theory of his deviations from his law. We are dealing with normal physiology, not with pathology.

Besides, the economy of the sacrament of Orders itself involves the recognition of these easy deviations, since it attempts to prevent them.

It might have been thought that the sacrament of Orders, unlike the sacraments that have an individual sanctification as their end, would communicate to the recipient only a power, and not a sanctifying grace. Do we not always say that the office of a priest is independent of the value of the man; that for the faithful what really matters is the office and not the value of the individual?

For the office to be holy and sanctifying, it is sufficient that the *Holy Church* be reflected in it.

That is very true, and it is necessary that we do not forget it, so that we may avoid certain kinds of scandal. But it must be said also that such a state of affairs is not the ideal, and that the religious institution, which strives after the ideal, attempts to make the individual character of the person answer to his office. It does so by determining the conditions that the candidate for Orders ought to satisfy; by watching, as far as it humanly can, to see that these conditions are fulfilled. But it does so also by attributing a sanctifying grace to the sacrament that creates the powers.

Christ, in consecrating His servant, wishes to give him the means for fulfilling his task not only materially, but worthily. For the dispenser of God's goods not himself to possess them and not himself to live them is a disorder. The curse of Heaven threatens the sanctifier who is not himself

holy; the preacher who does not practise what he preaches; the giver of Christ to others who goes himself to the idols of the world and the flesh.

The scribes and Pharisees are seated in Moses' seat, said the Saviour; *do therefore and observe what they say to you; but act not according to their works. For they say and do not. They bind heavy burdens and hard to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not lift to them one of their fingers.*

Malice may create such situations, and human misery, more widespread than malice, may explain them; but the religious institution is not directed towards them; it aims at perfection, which is the harmony of the perfume and the vase, of the channel and the water that runs through it, of the priest and the holy life that he ought to promote.

Do we not know, besides, that authority, which is bound up with the power of Order, is in the Church a work of charity and humility? Where shall we find these virtues unless in the inward union of the heart to God by grace, instead of the dominating and brutal gesture of the hand of justice striking?

What is needed is that the higher the power, the greater should be the grace, in order that one may be endowed with greater abasement of humility before God and abasement of service towards one's brethren.

Our doctors, penetrated with this thought, present as a sort of divine law the coincidence of the hierarchy of powers in the Church with the hierarchy of virtues. The Episcopate, they say, is a state of perfection, precisely because the Bishop possesses the fulness of sacred power. That power, far from dispensing him from anything, holds him to it the faster. Likewise, in its degree, the priesthood; likewise all the divers powers granted to men of religion.

Sancta sancte! Let the performance of holy things be done in a holy fashion! and the holier the act the holier the fashion of performing it. Alas! We who so speak cannot pretend to satisfy this divine wish. We know our shortcomings, and hence willingly own ourselves to blame.

There is only one sort of blame that we find it hard to put up with, and it is that of the folk who show themselves all the more eager to hunt out the bad or middling priest as they are themselves worse Christians, worse citizens, worse fathers, husbands, friends or representatives of their profession. But however it may be with their merits or our unworthiness, we say that that does not constitute the general law. The law of the religious institution is such that the communication of the truth and of the love of God must be effected by the priesthood as by the sun-illumined star which

diffuses light after taking its share of it to transform it into life.

Wherever God passes He must produce His divine effects. When He passes through the priesthood to reach the faithful He means to sanctify the priesthood. He tends to do this by offering it His grace.

If this grace be refused or diminished, that is our own fault, and moreover a great evil; for, as St. Jerome said, "When the laity are superior to the priests in virtue, then comes the ruin of the Church."

"If a man's life is despised," said St. Gregory, "it will follow that his preaching will be despised." It is not just that this should be so; but it will be so, and whoever conduces to such a result will have to answer for it. It is not just, we repeat, because the sacrament of Orders, although it confers grace, does not really consist in the conferring of this grace, but in the conferring of a *power*.

The faithful therefore must not let themselves be disturbed by the imperfections manifested in the exercise of this power.

As it is commanded to the priest to maintain a bearing worthy of his high functions, so it is necessary for others to know how to receive as from God what comes through the priest, without judging him, the intermediary. To continue our recent metaphor, the light which comes to us from the stars is always welcome, even though it come from a dead star, which reflects without itself making use of the beneficent influence of the heavens.

Let us put this aside in order to raise ourselves to the beauty of the religious conception which makes the hierarchy subserve a work that is no less than the divinisation of mankind.

Since the Holy Spirit has become man socially in the Church as the Word was made man individually in Christ, it functions according to human laws, fitted to realise what He wills.

In each individual the Holy Spirit allots His gifts in accordance with the various powers of the soul.

What we call supernatural virtues, faith in the understanding, charity in the heart, strength, temperance in our sensitive faculties, and the rest, are indeed a sort of hierarchy which make our inner government a real thing. So, in that human-divine body, the Church, the Spirit takes various forms according to the organs of that body, and the *sacramental character* attributed to the orders is as it were a social grace, destined to procure the other.

All is thus seen to be harmonious and perfect, divine and human.

As, in the life of our globe, the blood of the glaciers flows

through the capillary vessels of the mountains, the veins of the rivers, the living tissue of the plain, and afterwards the evaporations of the air, and then all that inhales and expects its sustenance from the earth; so the Christian order makes the goods of the soul of God flow through Christ, the universal glacier which is fecundated by the divine cloud of the Spirit: from Christ through the hierarchical priesthood by which the sacred things are distributed; and lastly, from the priesthood to the faithful. And that this latter should invisibly be in direct relation with the Source, as the earth drinks in the dew as well as irrigating waters, is a rule which, far from exempting the hierarchy, is binding on them. Normally it must make use of visible means and receive its salvation from that system of life which establishes our Church in God.

CHAPTER VIII

MATRIMONY

WE have seen that the sacraments are divided into two groups. Five of them are for the sanctification of individual life; two are consecrated to social life.

Of these latter, that which we have just been examining, Holy Order, has for its end the government of the Christian society.

Matrimony, with which we have still to deal, relates to the propagation of the species, and its purpose is to ensure it under conditions worthy of the religious man, worthy of religious humanity.

Certain folk would fain ask us here: Why are you concerned with these things? The rites of nature, the propagation of the human species and all the interests attached thereto are the business of the private person or of the legislator. The life of religion is above and consequently outside their domain.

In reality they would like us to have a religion so sublime that it would nowhere touch reality, and to dream of a sanctity which would be the sanctity of nothing in the real world.

What is religion for if not to sanctify life, the whole of life, in order to urge it on to its supreme ends?

Marriage ought to gain all the more from this observation as it is evidently connected with the primary constitution of human nature.

Man is a compound of spirit and of flesh.

If he were pure spirit, there would be no room for marriage. Each individual would completely represent his species in himself. The human couple would be meaningless. Moreover, since death would not exist, nor those changes which are the measure of time and space, there would be neither child nor adult, new-born nor man in the decline of life. The matrimonial union, which completes the living and replaces the dead, which guards cradles and deathbeds against the twofold weakness of the extremes of life, would have no longer any reason for existence.

But we are incarnate. The human species is realised in manifold individuals who are echeloned through time like the manifestations and the progress of individual life.

There is an exact parallelism between these two orders of life. The part which food plays in each of us in defending us from ever-imminent death and repairing our losses, pro-

creation plays in regard to the race as a whole, repairing its incessant losses. Procreation is the food of the race.

There is only this capital difference for the Christian, that in our bodies that which is replaced by food is entirely lost, and on the contrary that which death causes to be lost is found again, singularly transplanted. Hence what is gained by birth for the renewal of the race is gained for eternity. Death only strikes with its mighty and hurried blows this sad anvil of earth in order to send the sparks flying, the souls, which will be to-morrow stars in the firmament of the spirit.

In this way marriage helps to secure the kingdom of creative ends. "To fill up the number of the elect" is the noble end attributed to it by theologians.

But while it is thus meant to give mankind a greater extension, marriage, rightly understood, is also intended to give it a greater worth. This is its second purpose, a directly individual one, but indirectly a collective one; for those individuals who are worthless in themselves are equally worthless for society, and they will not be of the elect if they are worthless as human beings.

Now the whole man, to realise his worth, normally requires the union of man and woman, who represent in all respects the two complementary sides of humanity. The one upholding the other; each receiving and imparting values of light, of action, of feeling, of life in all its forms, and lastly of fruitfulness, the work of man will possess all its resources; it will be sure of its future; it will be able to mount, from parent to child, towards better realities, since the child, thanks to its education by both parents, will be as it were the sum of two souls.

And moreover, as the genealogical tree lengthens and widens, all its combinations will rest on this first good, the well assorted union, well ordered and well lived, and the whole social body, which issues from this stock, will find therein its value and the assurance of its progress.

Such is the ideal; such is the *raison d'être* of marriage, considered as an office of nature.

But if marriage is an office of nature in the individual and social order, we must for that very reason say, as in all our former arguments, that it rises to the dignity of a religious function.

For nature is not without God; it is enveloped in the world's religious plan; man must cause to enter upon the path of his real destiny all that helps to urge it forward, and which if badly managed or neglected might pull it back; for Christ has espoused humanity as it actually is; male and female. And since the union of male and female represents the very

constitution of true humanity, it enters with full justification into religious order and Christian institution.

For this reason marriage will be for us a sacrament as well as an office of nature.

We know well enough by this time that this means two things. A sacrament means a sign, a symbol; but not any kind of symbol; an active symbol, doing that which it signifies as far as our dispositions permit and their permanence maintains.

Now what does marriage signify, and what is it meant to secure?

St. Paul tells us that it signifies the union of Christ and the Church; that it will therefore tend for its part to secure the effects of this union, and that it is therefore a great sacrament; *Sacramentum hoc magnum est; ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia* (Eph. v. 32). This idea, though at first sight rather singular in its mysticism, is profoundly philosophical.

The Incarnation, in order to have its effects in humanity, to realise that divinisation of man which is the end of the Church, must have its reflection and its consequences in the union of the two sexes, of which each represents for its own part an aspect of humanity. Thence the whole of the religious constitution of the world must start in some respects.

Man united to woman to form the whole man, including therein matter, his natural continuation, which marriage particularly brings into the question; the whole man in his nature united to Christ to make man religiously whole, that is, divinised by grace; lastly Christ, the universal Man, united to God in a personal unity; this is the whole integration of the creature in God; this is the fulfilment of the religious plan.

And we can easily see the eminent place, both symbolic and real, which marriage occupies in it. There is the symbol, because the reciprocal gift of the spouses to form a complete life is the image of the vaster union of all humanity with its Redeemer. And this symbol is an active one, because it tends to realise in part what it signifies, through grace.

Every sacrament communicates a grace. By the institution of Christ, the ministry of the spouses who give themselves to each other, august priests of life, is fruitful in grace and draws down God not only to be the witness of the bond, nor even as it were the guest or the unseen friend of the new family, but as the guest of the hearts, in order that nothing of what has its germ there may be in contradiction to the ends of the contract, whose greatness we have just remarked.

This guest will not be an unwelcome third person; he will

be a bond. God does not separate, He unites; He is the universal Bond of all that His providence supports. Can the place in which we are separate us? God is the place where all spirits are. Can the law of action of the members separate them? God is our most profound law of action; His thought, which is mother of all, being also the preserver of all, the worker of progress and happiness for all.

The sanctifying effort of this sacrament will then tend to realise the union of the spouses in accordance with the laws that relate to the union of man with Christ in the Church, and thereby to the union of man with God in the Incarnation.

This is a difficult work. More than anywhere a sacramental help is needed here, because there is need of ruling, of curbing, of sanctifying the most formidable instincts of mankind; the instincts which give rise to the most frequent and the gravest deviations.

To unite man to woman in a true union is one of the greatest problems of life.

Between man and woman there is a principle of separation which illusion takes for a bond, but which is at bottom a cruel enmity; I refer to the egoism of the flesh. As the egoism of the individual is opposed in social life to the interest of the fraternal society; as sin, in the universal life, opposes the realisation of creative ends; so egoism, male or female, principally carnal, divides the human couple, and prevents the establishment of a truly common life.

The outwardly unfaithful man or woman divides the pair and tends to divide other pairs. The man or woman outwardly faithful, but inwardly egoistical and carnal, divides the pair by interposing between the spouses the sinful personality of one of them, or of both, instead of the complementary union of values.

"Man," it has been said, "is inwardly separated from woman by his desire of possessing her outwardly." This truth, the result of profound and universal experience, shows one of the most necessary parts which sacramental grace is needed to play; to overcome the impetuous instincts of nature, and to restrain them by love; by love governed by a reason enlightened by the divine reason, attentive to all the duties which love, properly understood, imposes on the human pair. So that what might cause disasters in us may become a strength; that even our inferior being, brought into the moral order, may become a source of greatness in us.

In dealing with passion, theologians distinguish two uses of it which render it either perverse and destructive or virtuous and fruitful.

There are *antecedent* passion and *consequent* passion, that is, passion which precedes the use of reason or faith, and so

hinders it; and passion which follows the exercise of reason or faith, and is of service to them.

A man is in a state of anger at the moment when he ought to make a decision on an action; he decides badly, for anger blinds him. But when the decision is taken, and the man is wholly engaged in the performance, it may happen that a generous anger, kept within its proper limits, is a strength. What would we do without anger, without passion generally, on the battlefields either of war or of life?

So the man who covets a woman anteriorly to Christian love or apart from its laws separates himself from her; for he refuses the union of lives, the moral and rational, fruitful union, in conformity with individual and universal nature, in conformity with God who ties the sheaf of love. And he renounces these fulnesses for a superficial union, transitory, exposed to every conflict, and blameworthy.

On the other hand, he who approaches the woman with a true love in his heart, a love, that is, conformed to the laws of life, of that individual life which is continued in social and divine life, such a man may lawfully allow the divinity of love to infiltrate through all the channels that our nature opens to it.

With religious charity in the soul, love means reasonable esteem, an affectionate heart, rightly directed devotion in action, and lawful passion in the senses.

All will be well, because all will be drawn from the true sources; because the same current will flow from God, from whom comes nature as well as supernature, the flesh as well as the spirit, noble pleasure as well as sacrifice. Those who nobly enjoy are ready to accept suffering when needed.

In the fermenting-vat, the sugar that is introduced becomes alcohol, sweetness is transformed into strength. So in a moral life well founded at the start, even pleasure and happy passion can work for the good, tighten the spiritual bond instead of breaking it, and far from withdrawing from God, draw near to Him by means of complete life.

How puerile it would be, and what a dangerous heresy from the religious point of view, to believe that passion in its proper place is offensive to God! We are not Manicheans, that we should incline to believe that the flesh is under a curse, and that all matter springs from the *Principle of Evil.* Rather do we say that matter and the flesh come from God.

The echoes of lofty and divine feelings in the senses are themselves lofty and divine, and God acknowledges His seal upon them.

The vibrations of the living dust that has become the flesh of man are a part of the great throbbing of nature's beating heart when the Creator Spirit broods and passes over it.

Did not Jehovah say *They two shall be one flesh?* And

what does this mean, if it be not the last consequence of a union first linked together in God, the Creator and Sanctifier, carried on by the mind and will of two beings who agree to a common life, and finally fulfilled by mystical rites, thanks to which other spirits arise, and a new fatherhood finds its place in heaven?

All is holy, all great in the sacrament of matrimony. All which it includes comes from God and has to return to Him. But the steps of the ladder must not be altered. For if the bottom step is put too high, it cannot fit in there, and a fall results. The flesh carries on the spirit, and is only in part its symbol, in part its servant. To put it at the top, or to let it act as the highest, is to spoil everything.

That is why the Church is so severe with regard to deviations in marriage. She has allowed nations to break off from her rather than yield to the caprices of their rulers. She is of iron, in face of those excesses which would sacrifice the spiritual, social, divine order to the demands of the flesh. But within that order she blesses. She professes that the realities of marriage are not only exempt from sinfulness, but good and meritorious; that they are not only good, but holy, in as much as they are an effect of the loving and inseparable union of lives, like the union between Christ and His Church, within the human-divine synthesis of life.

Thus our Church, without false modesty or childish timidity, dares to bless the marriage bed, after blessing the souls. Like an ancestress with her eyes and her heart full of eternity, she says in solemn tones: *Bless, O Lord, this bed, in order that those who are to lie thereon may be established in Thy peace, and may persevere in Thy will, may grow old and multiply for many years, and attain to the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Surely that is far greater than any Puritan narrowness.

The Church, praying thus, and counting on her sacrament to aid the good desires of the married pair, is conscious of grappling fast to God one of the ends of the chain that ties together our human clusters; of thus bringing into accord with the divinity that generated them not only spirits, but the matter which continues them and which is their field of action, in a word, all that is sprung from that universal Paternity which might better be called a Motherhood, since what it engenders does not arise from it.

God is a mother who conceives and never brings into the world, because outside herself there is no world which may receive her holy burden.

Thus considered, marriage, all marriage, is a religious function, since in it the natural function and the social function are

involved in that organisation whereof Christ is the Head and the Holy Spirit is the principle.

Hence we are not astonished when we hear our great Apostle declare : *This is a great Sacrament; I speak in Christ and in the Church* (Eph. v. 32).

And our theologians insist on this in saying that it is to the Passion of Christ, as always, that the sacrament of matrimony is attached, because it is on the Cross that the sad nuptials between Christ and redeemed humanity were celebrated.

As at the baptism of Christ contact with a sacred Flesh sanctified the waters of the world and deputed them to the sanctifying function of Baptism; so the love of Christ dying for men sanctified love, which desires to live and would even consent to suffer and die for what it loves.

It is not in grief that man and woman are united; but it is in love, and love that suffices for all joy, also suffices for all sorrow and for all destinies, including death.

That is why the Church, without speaking of the absolute and highly justifiable opposition which she makes to divorce, has never liked—we say *liked*—second marriages.

She allows them; she often approves them; she would at need advise them on account of particular circumstances; but she prefers that union which is left devastated by death, because in this breakage that nothing can mend, this desolate widowhood, faithful even in absence, the eternity of love is better reflected, and because eternal human love is the symbol, and as it were a detached particle of that divine love which unites the Saviour to men in our universal Church.

II.—*THE SACRAMENTALS*

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL IDEA OF THE SACRAMENTALS

THE sacramental character of the Church, that is to say, her tendency to make use of expressive and effective symbols for a religious end, is especially shown in what are properly called the *sacraments;* but these do not exhaust it. She herself is fundamentally sacramental, and consequently she is so in all her manifestations.

The Church is a sacramental, so far as she is a symbol and means of unity between God and man, just as Christ, her Chief, the "Head" of the organised mystical body, is a sacramental, because He is the expression of God as given to man, and of man as given to God.

Hence we should find in the Church marks of this profound character, besides the sacraments properly so called. These may be distinguished from the sacraments in as much as these latter answer to the fundamental needs of the religious life; and for this reason they have been made the object of a more special institution, and endowed with a more direct efficacy. But for the secondary rites in question a name is used which connects them with the common principle, a word which, though weaker, is yet expressive of the central idea: they are called *sacramentals* (*Sacramentalia*).

Some people, in their desire to explore this corner of theology, go rather astray, and at a pinch become scandalised. They ascertain that the need of parallelism has led to the distinction of seven sacramentals, as there are seven sacraments. Then, when they consult learned authors or documents, St. Thomas, the Council of Trent, etc., they find reference made to many (*multa*) or to an indeterminate number (*Si quæ aliæ res . . .*) and they are surprised.

However, this is quite natural.

In handbooks for children, everything can be clearly defined: but in science, everyone knows that clearness is diffused in a thousand shades of meaning that can only be apprehended with difficulty, and this is much more the case with regard to reality.

Can anyone tell how many colours there are in the rainbow? There are three; seven; they are innumerable. In thoughts and feelings there are even more shades of distinction.

Classifications may be attempted, but they are never exhaustive. Reality is inexhaustible : reality is *ineffable* in the etymological sense of the word; it cannot be *stated* in a determinate number of concepts or of words; it dives deep into the twofold Infinity of our existence; the Infinity of Matter, which is subdivided even to nothingness; and the Infinity of Mind, which extends its endowments as far as God, the term of the ideal and inaccessible.

The sacramental character of the Church, because it impregnates the Church through and through, until it even becomes confounded with her, is subject to this condition. Her sacraments are seven, as there are seven colours in the spectrum; but the atmosphere of the sacraments, so to speak, all the rites which accompany them, and those which start out from them in order to sanctify life by giving it a religious significance, a religious direction and import; all this is sacramental too. And if it be said, as it is indeed sometimes said, that there are seven sacramentals, this only means that we have agreed to confine ourselves to the principal ones; and the choice of these may give rise to dispute.

In reality, there are as many sacramentals as there are things, actions, words, rites which naturally form part, or which the Church invites to form part, of the great sanctifying current which, in the name of the Incarnation, leads us from the sensible to the understanding of the Divine.

We can, then, only give examples. The choice of them will be a question of practical convenience. Before enumerating them, we will begin with a general definition.

Sacramentals are outward acts of religion, or things consecrated by religion, for the purpose of bringing us nearer to God through Christ.

The effects we expect from them are those which the Christian life demands. The purification of the soul; the satisfaction of justice for our faults; the expulsion of evil spirits; the alleviation of our sufferings, if our heavenly Father thinks it expedient; the removal of evil influences on the same condition and the inner liberty of the children of God; such are those which theology enumerates.

Those little familiar actions, those unimportant things, an aspersion, a cross traced on the forehead or breast, a formula; such things, when they enter on the great current of religion, become efficacious. They become so by reason of our psychological make-up, wherein the sensible plays so great a part. They become so by reason of their institution, which has the power of winning over higher powers; the power of association, which is creative so far as the individual is concerned; the power of Christ, in whom the Christian association finds

its centre; the power of God, who is joined to Christ, and who is joined also to us through Him and through the Church.

It is a natural tendency of man to seek for symbols in nature, to speak and to act metaphorically, to attach to things material a moral meaning. All literatures make this manifest, and the inner constitution of languages proves it, for symbolism is their foundation.

Is not an *ardent* supplication an allusion to the ardour of fire? Is not a *deluge* of calamities a metaphor borrowed from water? Does not the use of the phrases *Attic salt, the salt of wisdom,* call to mind the active and preservative properties of salt? To speak with *unction,* to apply *balm* to sorrow, etc., are a series of symbolic words. And if I make a gesture of denial, do I not appear to wipe off, as from a blackboard, what has just been said to me, or to get rid of a mental obstacle as I would sweep away a stone or a branch?

All our formal actions, all our salutations, our exchanges of visiting-cards, our birthday or wedding presents, our funeral customs, everything in our social life is formed of symbolism and is directed to the bringing together of matter and mind, *to express,* and thereby to *stimulate* the mind.

Put these symbols at the service of the religious idea; do so with feelings which correspond to the action, in the name of a common Christian tradition, under the ægis of authority, or by formal institution of the authority which expresses and governs the society, hoping, or rather believing, that Christ, the religious Head of the human race, united to His members in what they do in His name, will give to the pious and significant actions which we institute an efficacy answering to our interior dispositions, and to the higher dispositions of His Providence; and you have *sacramentals.*

All the poetry of nature may be incorporated in them, as we shall see if we make ourselves familiar with the wonderful liturgies of antiquity.

And besides the poetry of nature, directly borrowed by our authors, we find in the sacraments all the pearls which the pagan cults, which arose among the most artistic peoples of the universe, had accumulated through the ages without being able to enshrine them in correct dogma or pure morals.

These signs, which are so natural, so close to daily life, so expressive to the universal mind, are of great efficacy, provided always that the soul of them be retained, in reaching man's heart, which is always so wide open to natural influences.

By their soul is meant the Christian sense that is attached to them, their higher significance, the doctrine wherewith they are impregnated and the allurement of the feelings which it is

their office to stimulate. Without that they are but dead, and one is inclined to say to the man who makes use of them without understanding them, without thinking of and desiring their moral effect, and who sees the unbeliever smile at his side: Yes, the unbeliever is right. He may well mock at what you yourself have made puerile; he may well consider worthless what you yourself have killed. *Let the dead bury your dead.*

But a thing is not to be judged by people who abuse it, nor by the language of strangers who misrepresent it.

Sacramental action has an efficacy of its own, as an expressive and evocative symbol, as a power-idea, as one of our philosophers would say.

It has another efficacy as well, or, to put the same thing in other words, the former is reinforced by the fact of the Christian unity which includes the individual who performs the act.

Our unity, whereof our authorities are the connecting-link, puts the prayer and the merits of each at the service of all. When the Church says, as in the blessing of the Paschal Candle, *Lord God, Father Almighty, Light unfading who hast created all lights, bless this hallowed light, that thereby we may be inflamed and illuminated by Thy brightness . . .* we believe that this is not said in vain.

And how can it be in vain, when, at the head of our unity, stands He who said, *When two or three are gathered together in My name*—and much more when there is gathered together that universal assembly which the Institution calls into being and sets to work—*there am I in the midst of you.*

Our unity becomes fruitful with the fulness of God, for it is united to God through Christ. *Firstborn among His brethren,* Head of the human race which is deified through Him, Christ communicates a divine efficacy to all that He touches. If the Church, by means of its liturgical institutions, puts the humble things called sacramentals in contact with the wide-spreading fount prepared for us all on the Cross, nothing but the insufficiency of our own dispositions or our providential needs can limit their effects.

All in one through Christ; God in all, through Christ; ourselves united hierarchically, the faithful under their pastors, pastors and faithful under the Man-God; this is the condition required for the stream to flow, for prayer to ascend availingly and for favours to descend upon us.

God then bestows Himself by means of our rites, and by our rites He draws us to Himself. *God is made man* once more, in this humble way, *in order that man may be made God.*

The sacramental rite, being a prolongation of the Incarnation that is diffused everywhere, in all directions of life, tends

to ensure the effects of the Incarnation. If we correspond to what it seeks, our life is organised happily, that is to say, in conformity with its ends. Our evils grow less, or change their *sign,* as a mathematician would say. In place of a slavery in relation to matter or to the mind, human or superhuman, that oppresses us, they become a salutary trial, a method of estimating our value and a stimulant to its growth; in a word, a help to us.

Let us say it again, because it is the basis of the sacramental idea; matter is the servant of spirit; the moral order dominates the physical order, and, through Christ united to God, exercises its dominion for the benefit of whoever is fittingly disposed towards it.

If we run right away from this religious action, which unites us with a redemptive Omnipotence, we fall once more into the raging conflict of forces. Overwhelming natural forces, social forces thrown into the struggle for existence, interior forces delivered up to an exhausting multiplicity of life; we become their slaves.

With God, whose fatherly purposes dominate all things, we again find security. Illness, inner weakness, vital accidents, temptation, death, which are His servants, become ours as well. They are our "sisters," as St. Francis of Assisi said. We are free from their threatening, assured, on the contrary, of their co-operation.

It is to this that all the sacramental actions of the Church tend in so far as they are an application of redemption. The little actions called sacramentals, *lesser sacraments,* as they were called in olden times, take their place here in their order. We are not going to sacrifice them to cavillers.

We say indeed that it is truly *meet and just, right and healthful,* in order to serve God and mount up to God, to make use of all natural realities, all symbolic values, all the fruits of our union with one another and with Christ, in order that God may come to us and we may attain to God conformably with our nature and with our vital relations; in order that we may enter into the redemptive plan, which is based on the Incarnation; in order that we may set free creation, which also *groans,* from its anarchic undoing, from *the servitude of corruption.*

Far from materialising Spirit, of which Protestants and rationalists accuse us, our worship has for its end the impregnation of matter with Spirit. It does not want that deceptive dualism which, after having rationalised to the bitter end and yet not being able to abolish the flesh, nor the ground on which it walks, nor the exterior objects by which it lives, simply succeeds in leaving the flesh to corrupt, and things to become conquerors, and Spirit to be extinguished in them, through not having known how to make use of them.

That is all the more true the weaker our human nature. And it is all the more true of our weakest humanity, namely the little ones.

Without any partiality—for she owes all things to all men—the Church inclines most willingly towards those who can count on her alone for their spiritualisation; towards those whom matter easily captivates, because they are nearer to it, having to live on it daily, without being able to mount, poor miners buried in the obscure galleries of life as they are, to the regions of light.

The Church takes them where they are and speaks to them of what they know. She uses a language of images, a language of action, a language for primitive folk. And that shows a motherliness which all ought to appreciate, with which all ought to unite, even if they do not need it for themselves.

The great fraternity is opposed to the deadness of bumbledom. And besides, let us remember, the régime of the child is good for men too, for they are but big children. The régime of the earliest races is good for the civilised man in so far as elements of his first ancestors remain in him.

"Scratch the Russian," said Napoleon, "and you will find the Cossack." Scratch the proud rationalist, and you will find the man of sensitiveness and automatism. To take possession of his sensitiveness and to guide his automatism for his good is a merciful act on the part of religion.

Let us let Immensity treat us as children, as primitive folk in the moral order, as savages in the eternal civilisation into which, by means of the sanctifications which our rites endeavour to secure, we may humbly try to enter.

CHAPTER II

THE MASS

IF the sacramentals are, compared with the sacraments, a kind of secondary marks of the sacramental character of the Church, we ought not to be surprised to find that the sacraments properly so called are in part the source, and for the rest the centres of attraction, the rallying-points of the sacramentals. Those of the latter which are detached from them, like holy water or the *Confiteor,* do not fail to come back to them; those brought forth in their atmosphere, like the sign of the cross or ritual alms, take service there under the form of accessory ceremonies or annexes.

The Eucharist too, the sacrament *par excellence,* the sacrament on which all the rest depend, draws to itself more or less closely everything which can be called sacramental, and that is why the Mass, especially solemn Mass, *High Mass,* is the centre of the whole Catholic liturgy.[1]

The Mass is intended to be a commemoration and mystical reproduction of the redemptive act. Now for Catholicism Redemption is the starting-point, the all-embracing condition, the explanation and support of the religious movement as a whole. The Mass then reflects all the aspects of religious feeling, all the phases of history in which it is framed, all its attachments, all its tendencies and all its results.

Religion means adoration. Religion means praise. Religion means thanksgiving. Religion means repentance, invocation, confidence and love; religion aspires to union intimate and full, as well as to eternity. The phases of religion envelop the ages. It claims to embrace everything. Matter even, with all its manifestations, united with intelligence and made to serve mind, comes within its range. The various parts of the Mass, words or actions, conformed to this multiple essence, will give its most definite, sometimes its most splendid expression.

By its very divisions, the sacred rite conjures up the different epochs of religious history, and along with it the succession of human acts in regard to the end of religion. The *preparation,* or *Mass of the catechumens,* which extends from the beginning to the offertory, belongs to the Old Testament, that is to say to the expectation of Christ, and mystically, to interior purification, the condition for God's coming to us. Historically considered, it is a survival of the Saturday night office, in the synagogue, which the Saviour practised at Nazareth, at Capharnaum, at Jerusalem, and which the first Christians, remembering the Master's word

[1] The Mass was the grain of mustard-seed from which sprang the whole of the Catholic liturgy. (Dom Cabrol, *Liturgical Prayer,* chap. vi.)

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil, piously preserved, Christianising it more and more.

When the Apostles wrote to the distant Churches, their letters were read there, and they have been so read since under the name of *Epistles.* When the Gospels were written for a memorial of the divine deeds, they took a place of honour. And as when the Scriptures were read in the synagogues suitable commentaries followed, so to the Gospel and Epistle is added the sermon.

As a symbol of purification, at the beginning of solemn Mass, the *Asperges* gives the tone to the *Confiteor,* an admirable formula on which we have commented already, and which calls up a little later on the alternating supplications which are a kind of Litany of repentance and sorrow, *Lord, have mercy on us! Christ, have mercy on us! Lord, have mercy on us!*

And this is said in Greek (*Kyrie . . .*) even in our Latin rites, just as both Greek and Latin rites keep Hebrew words, *Hosanna, Amen, Sabaoth,* to preserve terms consecrated by long usage, and also to mark the universality of Christian idea and institution. On the Cross, the inscription over the Redeemer was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the language of mystery, the language of philosophy, and the language of law and administration.

To the preparatory part of the Mass is also joined the *Gloria,* that liturgical pearl, a pearl of the dawn through its very great antiquity, which the art of the centuries has set in an ever-expanding azure whereof Beethoven has made a world.[1]

Taken as a whole, the *collects* are a mine of jewels, and they are told off by priest and people next in succession. Let us pray, says the celebrant (*oremus*), and he lifts up his arms in the gesture of the *orante* of the catacombs, and raises his voice to express the thought of the day, to invoke the merits of the saint who is being celebrated, to recall continual needs, uniting all with Him who is the rightful Mediator and without mention of whom no prayer is ended: *Per Christum Dominum nostrum.*

Amen! reply the people, and this word has two meanings: Amen! *Thus indeed it is,* thou hast well expressed our intention. Amen: *So be it!* May God hear thee!

The preparations ended, the vestibule crossed, the liturgy draws nigh to the temple.

In the primitive Church, divided into Catechumens and

[1] In the *Mass in D* Beethoven plainly tries to set forth the whole of humanity at the foot of the mystic Cross. His *Dona nobis pacem* in particular, with its accompaniment of sounds of war, is an attempt to contrast religious thought with the warfare of mankind. His *Gloria* is truly a universal act of praise.

faithful, when the Church still lived amid a non-Christian environment whence it obtained its recruits, a deacon turned round at this point, and said, as to-day we say at the end: *Ite, missa est. Go, it is the dismissal,* or the sending away. Whence our word the *Mass.* And the Catechumens departed.

Then the mysteries began. They were inaugurated by the *Credo,* the natural bond between the exoteric and the esoteric parts of the rite. The profession of faith is here reduced to its principal elements; but yet it runs through the whole keyboard, from God eternal and from the *beginnings* to the reintegration, by the resurrection in God and by the eternal life of all things.

Then the priest returns and says, as before at the *collects, The Lord be with you!* This salutation, coming down to us from the old *salaam,* from the grave and sweet salutation which Jesus gave to His disciples, often returns in the course of the liturgy. It marks the reciprocal relation between the representative and the congregation.

The Lord be with you! says he who is instituted to communicate the sacred things (*sacerdos*). *And with thy Spirit!* reply the people, "for you to conceive, express and obtain what is the prayer and need of us all."

And the celebrant plunges into the liturgic mystery, while the organs, conscious of the solemnity of the moment, play some solemn piece and meditate together with us, for the priest has said: *Let us pray.* Happy thus to conceive their rôle!

In olden time, the faithful came up at this moment to offer gifts, which recalled those of the Epiphany, and which consisted first of all of the bread and wine of the sacrifice, then of other gifts in kind or in money for the upkeep of worship. The *offering,* still practised on certain occasions, is a survival of this. The blessed bread is another, besides signifying fraternity, and being also connected with the *agape.*[1]

During this time, the priest proceeds to the *offertory.* He presents the bread, whose grains, moulded together into one, tell of Christian unity; the wine, the product of a number of crushed grapes, whose common fermentation gives them their value. With the wine he has mixed a few drops of water which are absorbed in it, and he asks that *by this mystery* we too may be absorbed in the divinity of the Saviour. He incenses the oblation, the altar, the Cross. He himself, as the representative of Jesus, is incensed by the deacon, and all the clergy, all the faithful are incensed also, though unequally, because all, though unequally, make part of the unity

[1] In the same connection we may recall the offering which the bishop makes at his consecration-Mass of two small barrels of red and white wine, two loaves and two candles.

of Christ, and so are in a certain sense Christs, *saints,* as St. Paul calls them, united to the *Saint of saints.*

It is at the altar, above and below the altar, all around the altar, that the incensings tarry. It might be said the priest is attempting to impregnate it, to spiritualise it, in order that the consecrated Victim, borne up on the fragrant fumes, may mount, as on the wings of our aspirations, towards the throne where He intercedes.

After this, the priest washes his hands, so that he may touch only with clean hands, the symbol of a pure soul, the complete purity of the Lamb without spot.

He prays, summing up the intentions of all. He invites them to pray with him (*Orate fratres*). The secret prayers serve to determine the purpose of the oblation, the end which it proposes. And thus terminates the first part of the *Mass of the Faithful.*

The *preface* inaugurates the second. The bond between the two is formed by the impressive beginning which is the end of the secret prayers, and which announces the echo of the redemptive fact across the ages: *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.*

We are familiar with the sublime dialogue then exchanged at High Masses between the priest and the faithful, and after it that recitative which has inflamed all artists with enthusiasm, and which mounts, more and more grandiose, up to the *Sanctus,* bearing hearts on high (*Sursum corda*), giving thanks for the living Gift whose presence is about to be renewed, as well as the sacrifice; proclaiming it *meet and just, right and healthful* to praise the *Holy Lord,* the *Almighty, Eternal God at all times and in all places,* ever more and more; sending up like fumes of incense, or rather like the very voice of the universe in ecstasy the words *Holy! Holy! Holy!* which in the Bible are the song of the hosts of heaven (*Sabaoth*), that is to say, of the stars, and of the sublimer army of spirits.[1]

The earth joins to this her *Hosanna,* and the voice of children, as on Palm Sunday, is added, saying: *Blessed is He who cometh in the Name of the Lord!*

Then there is the *Canon,* that is, the *rule,* the thing of rule *par excellence,* the precious rite, and therefore definite, invariable, the centuries which change all things daring not to change in anything those simple words. It tells for whom the sacrifice is offered: that is to say, for the whole world; next, for Holy Church, whom God is besought to preserve in her *unity;* for the heads of the hierarchy who represent the group, the far-off and highest head, the Pope, the nearer head, the Bishop: for all who hold the *Catholic and Apostolic* faith; lastly, narrowing the circle, for those who have been more

[1] The threefold repetition is a Hebrew superlative.

particularly recommended to the priest, those who are near him and alive. As for the dead, dear or remote, the circle will widen again presently to include them. For that we must wait till the consecration is over, for thus the whole Church, divided between two worlds, will be grouped around her present Saviour.

Memento! Remember. The faithful ought to join in this invitation, and declare to God by name, or by simply opening their heart for God to read, their desires each for each and each for all.

In order that they may be favourably heard, the priest invokes in a long enumeration all the categories of the saints; he calls upon them, and it is in their presence procured by remembrance that he solemnly extends his hands over the sacrifice prepared, as of old did the high priest over his victim.

"May this sacrifice," he says, "the sign of our worship and that of all Thy family, be in every wise *blessed, marked, ratified,* made *fitting* and *acceptable,* in such sort that it may become for us the Body and Blood of Thy most dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ. *Who, the night before He suffered, took bread in His holy and venerable Hands, and raising His eyes to heaven, to Thee, God, His almighty Father, giving Thee thanks, blessed, brake and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take and eat ye all of this,* THIS IS MY BODY."

Here the priest, confounding himself with Christ, the narrator with the Author of the drama renewed and present, passes from ancient history to eternal history, and feeling himself, his very self, the representative of all the holy family, of all the Church united in its head, of the human race, conscious and unconscious, provided that it does not deny its soul, of the universe, joined to man and an inferior participant in his destiny, he says, himself unworthy, but the authorised voice of One who is more worthy, *This is My Body, this is My Blood.*

All men are united to him, and each in his place ought to strive to become a Christ also, a Christ for his own salvation and for that of his neighbours; a Christ for humanity united in Jesus, and which He offers with Himself to the eternal Father; a Christ of our dumb universe for which he must speak, because it also is a son of God, it also is redeemed, brought back from chaos to order; it also is predestined, *the new heavens and the new earth* being promised to the future.[1]

[1] Formerly, from the *Orate fratres* to the Communion, a curtain was drawn before the priest, in memory of the *Holy of holies*, and in order to heighten the impression of mystery. Only the little bell announced the *Elevation.* In the Eastern churches the arrangement of the altar, hidden by the ikonostasis, discloses the same feeling. Among us the priest remains more or less easily visible (in Spain hardly so), but he speaks in a low voice and does not turn towards the people.

That is why, all together throughout the ages (*per omnia sæcula sæculorum*), bidden by healthful precepts (*præceptis salutaribus moniti*), obeying the divine institution with a humble boldness (*divina institutione formati audemus*), they begin to say—or to chant—the prayer which embraces them all, the *Pater noster.*[1]

By the *daily bread* which is asked for is meant in the first place the expected Eucharistic bread. In adding *Forgive us our sins as we forgive,* is anticipated the kiss of peace, which primitive usage made general in memory of the Master's words: *If thou bringest thy gift before the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, go first and be reconciled with thy brother.* Reasons of good order have reserved this ceremony to the clergy, or in any case have modified it; but its spirit remains, and the *dona nobis pacem, grant us peace,* resounds in the ears of all.[2]

During the kiss of peace, the priest again takes up in detail the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, introducing therein fresh grounds for hope; the Blessed Virgin, the Saints, all the good distributed through the Church, above all the *Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world* (*qui tollis peccata mundi*) and whose mystical presence becomes more intimate through the following third part of the Mass, the *Communion.*[3]

Indeed, first the priest, afterwards the faithful are invited to unite themselves to Christ effectively so that thereby they may be better united in spirit. They ask that *the Body of Christ,* united to His Divinity, *may keep their soul,* and the body that is united to it, *unto eternal life.*

The priest says in his name and in the name of those who have communicated: *Thy Body has become my Food and Thy Blood my drink; may they cleave to my soul, and may no trace of sin remain in me, who have received the sacraments of purity and holiness.*

The anthem called the *communion* is sung, the list of *collects* at the start is resumed with renewed hope; twice the priest and faithful salute each other with the Christian saluta-

[1] In Eastern liturgies the *Pater* is recited in common. In the Latin rite the people say only: *But deliver us from evil,* to which the priest replies *Amen.* In the Mozarabic liturgy the people reply *Amen* to each petition: *Hallowed be Thy Name—Amen; Thy Kingdom come—Amen.*

[2] The *pax,* a small metal plate adorned with a religious picture, is sometimes given to the faithful to kiss after being kissed by the priest.

[3] Before the communion the fraction takes place, which formerly consisted in a division of the consecrated bread among all the faithful. To-day it is nothing more than a gesture, but it is an expressive one; it signifies the community of spiritual nurture, the divine distribution. The Eucharist was long called the *Breaking of Bread.* "As this bread was dispersed upon the hills as corn and has become a single loaf," so the Christians of the whole world and of all ages ought to become a single spiritual body.

tion, *The Lord be with you!* Lastly the priest or deacon bids the assembly depart, *saying, Ite, missa est—Go, this is the sending.*

I translate it thus because pious authors do not like the formula translated otherwise. It does not refer to *departing;* it means that we are to go whither the Saviour *sends* us.

When the Apostles left Jerusalem after the great drama of which the Mass is a repetition, Jesus said to them His *Ite, missa est,* and it was a real mission which He gave them. And we too have a mission in the name of Christ. We are *a royal priesthood,* said St. Peter. The Mass, a contact with God, must charge us with healthful influences which we ought afterwards to spread abroad. The *last gospel,* the *blessing* at the end and the supplications which Leo XIII. and Pius X. have added to it, succeed in impregnating us with sentiments and thoughts to this effect.

Is it understood how such a rite, accompanying a sacrament, takes itself a sacramental character, eminently capable of drawing men near to God, of drawing them away from sin, of forgiving all debts and of warding off all evils, in the measure of their dispositions and providential necessities, from those who take part in it?[1]

The Mass, considered as a ceremony, is the richest of the sacramentals; it contains and surpasses them all. We shall not forsake it then when we speak of the others, particularly in recalling the lofty prayer which is incorporated in it, the *Pater noster.*

[1] "I declare," wrote Newman, "that in my eyes there is nothing so moving, so consoling, nothing which so surpasses and overpowers the imagination as the Mass as it is celebrated in our churches."

CHAPTER III

THE PATER NOSTER

WHEN the Divine Master was seated on the Mount of the Beatitudes, instructing his disciples, one of them, moved by an impulse that was more than individual, and constituting himself the mouthpiece of a group that was itself a mouthpiece, and, in short, acting in the name of humanity, since the Twelve, in the thought of Jesus, represented *the twelve tribes of Israel,* which in their turn stood for the world—one of them said suddenly, *Master, teach us to pray.* And Jesus, as if He had always anticipated this apparently unexpected question, Jesus, who had the Holy Spirit ever on His lips, replied :

" When you pray, say :

" Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil."

We picture the scene as a mighty vision. Is not the little Galilean hill a height from which Christ dominates history—Christ, the Son of Man, whose every word and action has a universal bearing, like the little cinematographic film whose magnified projection is only limited by its fineness of detail and the power of the light?

Below the Master lies the Holy Land, a figure of Catholicity throughout the ages. Around Him are the first elements of the hierarchy which is the religious framework of humanity.

It is on this dramatic world-stage that we hear the formula proclaimed, concise, dense, rich in all that a rightly composed prayer should contain, setting it forth in fitting order, and in forms so suggestive of fruitful thoughts when analysed.

Our Father! These two little words, like the simple uplifting of one's eyes, calmly break away from the thousand theoretical and practical errors which in all ages have gathered about the name of God. This expansive plural gathers us all in one when we speak to the Infinite, who is over us all. This loving name, respectful, intimate yet not familiar, confiding, full of wants, but wants ruled by a Father's wisdom and kept within bounds; this name drives right away the thought of God as a mere idea, a mere metaphysical expression, the " God of philosophers and learned men," and also the idea of God as a fetish, which led all the old religions astray. Have we not already in these two words a wonderful upward soaring of the soul, which is borne yet higher by the qualifying addition *who art in heaven?*

Who does not feel the astounding confidence these words are intended to convey?

Father, who art in heaven! Thou whose Name echoes in imagination "to the highest point of the luminous and inaccessible ether"; Thou who from that height seest all, who art able from that centre of the machinery of the Universe to do all things! Thou who dwellest also in the heavens of the intelligence, that is, in the domains of the mind, and in us, who belong to them: who art therefore within, as Thou art without and above; to whom we can appeal in silent contemplation as well as, and better than by crying out through space: Thou whom we must believe to be infinitely far off by nature, but very near at hand by Thine inward operation and Thy goodness; who, because Thou art free from our mutability, our ignorance and weakness, canst succour them in us, by raising us who dwell on this cold and obscure planet in the direction of Thy greatness; truly in every way Thou art in heaven, O our Father!

The order of the petitions which are presented to this universal Father corresponds to that of our desires, when ruled by a religious mind. Firstly divine things, secondly earthly. Firstly the coming of the true goods, then deliverance from evils.

At the head of the divine goods stands that which concerns God Himself; the sanctification of His Name, that is to say His glory, the only good which can touch Him, since His Being is fulness. That He may be known, praised in the mind by adoration, praised with the lips by prayer, praised in deeds by virtue; that is the first desire which our filial instinct causes us to form.

There follows the manifestation of His *Kingdom.* We shall know that it is He who governs, if all that thinks and that is able to turn aside from Him comes back to Him. The diffusion of this kingdom, in us, around us, in depth and in breadth, in such sort that all things and all men, all things in all men may be submitted to the divine empire, this is the purpose of this petition.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: on the earth subject to change by reason of our restlessness, as in heaven where mighty laws rule all things; on the earth sinful or tempted, as in heaven where the elect live in Thee, free from our wretched caprices.

After this, but only after this, we ask for the necessaries of this life. And even here we do not forget to include the spiritual means destined to procure the goods of the soul asked for in the first place. And in order to state in a single word all those necessary things which are known to God; in order to show that moderation which is fitting when we are

dealing with means and not with the highest ends, we specify *bread.* Bread, that modest nourishment which is taken in sufficiency, not in excess; but which is yet so fundamental that we speak of it as of life itself: *to earn one's living, to earn one's bread.*

And we say: *Give us,* to signify that we wish to receive it only from heaven, not from the enemy of God's Kingdom, evil.

And we insist on the words *our* bread, to indicate that we do not wish to gain it at the cost of others, by unjust acquisition; but on the other hand we ask for it in common, being ready to share it.

We add *daily,* because each day's bread suffices for the day, and we leave the future to Him who knows the future; and moreover, because we do not want for one day the bread of several days, a uselessly encumbering and corruptible treasure.

The opposite evils from which we ask to be delivered are set out in the same order as the goods; save that there is nothing contrary to God, and if we have besought His glory so that we may be united to it, knowing that this glory is always satisfied in one fashion or another, we dare not call up the idea of shame with regard to God. But as concerns ourselves, there is something opposed to the Kingdom of God and to His will: sin. If we have committed it, we ask that it may be wiped out: *Forgive us our sins.* And as for the condition imposed when it is said *You will be served in the same way as you have served others,* we add that our heart consents to it: *Forgive us our sins as we forgive.*

Lastly, since the future always has its snares, we ask that temptation, if it must come, may not carry us off with it; that God will proportion it to our strength; that in any case He will sustain us in the combat: in short, that He may triumph in us and that we may be *delivered from evil.*

In this last term, besides moral evil, are comprised all the evils which compromise our destiny, that is to say, those which are not justified by the necessity for putting us to the proof, and which would accordingly be a gratuitous diminution of our happiness, in this world or the next.

This is what the Master meant to teach us in a few words suddenly called for and calmly spoken, yet with more effect than the writing of the Decalogue amid thunders on Sinai.

We may well believe that He Himself prayed thus.

When He went up some hill in the evening, as He used often to do, after His day's work was over; alone, and far from noise, even from that of His own life; entering, after mapping out His time for action, into the eternity of His work; forsaking the sower's gesture as he stoops to sow, to turn once more towards the open fields; finding Himself again without effort in the simplicity of the redemptive plan; God

above Him, man beneath, and Himself, their sublime link, participating in both in order to bring them together; all this with the star-bejewelled Eastern night in the background, Judæa or Galilee asleep, and His holy breathing which you could hear in the silence of the night—what was it that He said, in the ineffable colloquy He then began?

In heart or on lips, in actual words or their equivalent, did He not utter what He was going to present to His own as the perfect prayer?

Did not the sublime prayer contain everything for Him as for each of His children? Must not He, the universal Shepherd, entrusted with the salvation of all men, charged with the destiny of all, *made sin for all,* and also, doubtless, made aspiration, sorrow, helplessness or energy; and yet, on the other hand, raised by divine predestination to a degree of dignity which allowed Him to make Himself heard : must not He, the Centre of the moral universe, whereof the other universe is the servant, have murmured, with that voice which was the voice of all men, addressing Himself to Him who is All, and whose inward presence, extending even to identity of person, threw Him into ecstasy : Our Father, Who art in heaven ! . . .

The Cross would be only the consecration of this sacerdotal prayer.

With His arms extended wide, His feet lifted above the ground, His head raised skywards and aureoled with sorrow, Christ would send forth a new appeal, and if this time the *Pater* were compressed almost entirely into only one of its petitions, *Forgive us our trespasses, Father, forgive them,* a formula that the situation marked out as then specially redemptive, its general intention would none the less be the same, and these words would not be exclusive.

Later on, on that mystic Calvary which is also the hill of prayer, on the altar, the same prayer sounds forth. There it is regarded as so important, so sacramental, in union with the sacrament *par excellence* of the Lord, that it occupies the central place between consecration and communion, and is never separated from it.

In the time of the Apostles, when persecution threatened and time was pressing, when every other ceremony might be omitted, the *Pater* was always preserved. The Mass, in those days, consisted of the breaking of bread and the Lord's Prayer, as if to say : There are two sacraments, the real sacrament and the verbal sacrament; what Christ has commanded us to do : *Do this in memory of Me;* and what He has commanded us to say : *When you pray, say* . . .

In the other sacraments, the *Pater* is not lacking either. In the initiatory sacrament, baptism, it represents the first

exercise of the right of sonship permitted to him who is introduced into the Church. In olden times, the catechumen, who was supposed to have learned it by heart, but was not yet allowed to recite it in public, pronounced it for the first time, turned to the east, to the direction of the sunrise, to celebrate his illumination, as the baptismal renovation was then called.

It is for all these reasons that the *Pater,* even taken by itself, apart from the sacraments, is considered by Christian tradition as a sort of sacrament. That is to say that there is attributed to it, when it is said with feelings that correspond to it, an efficacy of its own, which surpasses that of our dispositions in themselves, because it is like an institution; because the action of Christ covers it; because, being the perfect prayer, it seems that it should benefit in a special way from our Saviour's so insistent words: *Ask, and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you;* because, formulated in actual terms by our divine Advocate, *in whom are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God,* we believe that it says all that has to be said, in the terms wherein it has to be said, to gain our cause; because when we say the *Pater* perfectly and under the influence of grace, the Holy Spirit also says it in us, He who cries, says St. Paul, in the depth of our hearts: *Father! Father!*

That, in short, is why the *Pater,* Christ's prayer, the Christian's prayer *par excellence,* the sacramental prayer, is also the essential prayer of the Church.

This follows directly, since the Church is Christ made social, the Christian collectively considered, the sacrament become a social body to give God and to lead to God.

This prayer, then, the Church not only says, but—better than that—she realises it.

Her whole liturgy means: *Hallowed be Thy Name!*

Her mission on earth is nothing but the cry *Thy Kingdom come!* translated into action.

Her attitude with regard to men, with regard to her own difficulties and to the limits imposed upon her efforts, means *Thy will be done!*

She asks and seeks to procure for her children all that is necessary for them in things spiritual and temporal: *bread,* and especially that divine Bread whereof she is the distributor.

To relieve our weakness, she asks and procures, through *penance,* the benefit of the words *Forgive us our trespasses,* suggesting to us by her counsel and example the condition *As we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Knowing that our recoveries are always provisional, she says *And leads us not into temptation,* and she multiplies safeguards, preservative influences, around us.

Lastly, to *deliver us from evil* is the most frequent, if not, alas, the principal end of her prayers and her work.

Every member of the Church who applies this prayer to himself and says it in secret will only keep its spirit by making his soul belong to a community, by entering as an instrument in a concert, into the great social harmony whereof Christ is the conductor.

Without that, he has sterilised his prayer at the start. When he says *My* Father, he has no longer a Father, because the common Father is *ours* or is not at all. When he pretends to adore all alone, he is without the right to do so; to praise all alone, he is voiceless. When he asks only for his own bread, he cannot obtain it, for the bread is on the common table. When he beseeches pardon, he is obliged to despair of it, if he does not betake himself in one fashion or another to the *keys* that open and set free *on earth* and *in heaven.* And how could he say *as we forgive,* if he is not in loving relation with the assembly of his brethren? Mutual pardon is another aspect of mutual love, of the organised love that is the Church.

In every way, at all times, in all things, the sacramental and the social coincide, in the bosom of a society which is nothing at all, if it is not fundamentally united, since it is what it is only through its union in God through Christ.

CHAPTER IV

RITUAL ALMS

IN the collection of discourses which St. Matthew attributes to our Lord in the last days of His public life, we very often find this vision of the world beyond commented on: *When the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left.*

Then shall the King say to them that are on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.

Then shall the just answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungry and fed Thee, thirsty and gave Thee to drink, and when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in, or naked and covered Thee? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison and came to Thee?

And the King answering shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me. . . .

These solemn declarations and their counterpart, which follows in the text: all this scene, which might be called the assizes of love, gives the key of the traditional doctrine which has made of alms, besides an act of virtue and charity, an act of religion, and as it were a sort of sacrament.[1]

What, indeed, is meant by saying *Whenever you have done it to one of these My least brethren, you have done it unto Me,* if not that Jesus institutes the poor man as His representative, as a living symbol of Him, and a charitable deed done to the poor man as a sign of union with Him, as a means of that union, and consequently as a kind of sacrament, if it be true that every active instituted symbol, in the religious order, is a sacramental thing?

The institution, besides, might have been taken for granted. It was not necessary for Christ to say to us *That which you do unto these My least brethren*—and your own brethren—*you do unto Me,* since the whole foundation of our religion consists precisely in the unity of the Head with the members,

[1] It is the rule in theology that every virtuous act can serve as the matter of a religious act; but this is especially true of alms.

and if my members are me, so also all the members of Christ are Christ Himself.

If He says it specially concerning those who are in distress, it is because in their case it is most necessary; because the member that is threatened seems all the more for that reason the only one of interest, the only one which counts, and consequently the one which best expresses the whole, as if it were said that the wounded soldier symbolises the Fatherland better than the trooper on the march.[1]

But the foundation of the thought is quite apparent. To succour one's neighbour and to prove thereby that one loves him is to love the Christ in him, to love God in Christ, when it has once been comprehended that faith working by charity makes one single body of us all, of which His Spirit is the divine soul.

And if it be true that love of God and in God is our all; that religion and virtue are nothing else than this; that in this consists, as the divine Teacher declared, the sum of *the Law and the Prophets,* and that according to the saying of Augustine, to love thus is a condition sufficient to justify fundamentally all that one does—*Love, and do what you will*—then we can understand how, at the time of the supreme assizes, the King estimates after the simple examination of our relations with others the total value of those whom He judges.

We understand why the Bible says (Tob. xii. 9), without restriction, as if by antonomasis, *Alms delivereth from death, and* IT IS THAT *which atones* for sins. This it is, not by its materiality, not by reason of its body, which is money or service, but by reason of its soul, which is love.

In order to be delivered from death and from evil, it is sufficient to love God, with that love of friendship which is always reciprocal and which carries with it every good. But to love God effectively, we must love Him where He is to be found, in our brethren; we must love Him in the state in which we are united to our brethren. To wish to divide ourselves, or to separate God from His own, is to give up wishing God to be God, and ourselves to be ourselves. It is, then, not to love Him in Himself, and it is no longer to love Him in ourselves, but to love in His place a heartless idol, and in our own a phantom, selfish self criminally substituted for the divine ego.

The first disciples understood this so well, that *Christian* and *fraternal* were the same thing for them, and also for

[1] Jesus had said: *By this shall men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another.* But still it is necessary for this sign, in order to be a sign at all, to be visible. Interior charity is not manifest. Everything can demonstrate it; but alms give a palpable, a sacramental sign of it.

the pagans who surrounded them. *See how they love one another,* men said, and assuredly this attractive impression had much to do with the rapid diffusion of Christianity.

The institution of deacons at once corresponded to the ritual or quasi-ritual element in alms. Charity was thus a religious service, corresponding to a *sacred order.*

When St. Paul ordered collections among his people for the poor of Jerusalem, he bade them pray that their alms might be received favourably, as if they went directly to the Lord Himself.

It is with such thoughts that throughout the Christian ages charitable collections were inserted in the very heart of the divine office, to signify that the sacrifice afforded to love forms part of the unbloody sacrifice of the Saviour, and that each of the faithful is called upon to say with the priest, *Accipe hostiam,* Receive, O Lord, this holy offering, that it may be changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Does it not indeed change into the divine Body and Blood, this offering which is going to nourish, under one form or another, those of whom it was said : *That which you do unto one of these little ones, you have done unto Me?*

Our mutual gifts are the offertory of a Mass which continues throughout time, a universal Mass in which Christ, always present and "interceding" for us, offers together with Himself, in token of love, all that love gives Him by giving it to His members.

And therefore it is that outside the temple, beginning from the porch where the poor man feels himself at home, where Christ is at home in person, as He is at home in the tabernacle and on the altar; throughout the annexes of the temple, in hospitals, in monasteries where life with Jesus can only be conceived if the *brethren of Jesus* are admitted there, charity extends throughout all the institutions which depend on Christianity.

Christian kings acknowledged it by appropriate action when on days of religious solemnity they invited to the royal table unfortunates who represented the divine presence there, so that it might be honoured in its authentic substitute.

In families the principal events of life were sanctified by free bounties. Communes and towns, which are larger families and emulators of kings, followed their example from above and from below. They all had those charitable institutions which were generally regarded as manifestations of religion.

From the time of the Apostles, Rome had been divided into regions, for the purpose of relief, as our cities are divided into parishes. From the fourth century upwards, after the great persecutions had ceased, institutions of every kind sprang into existence everywhere, for every category of unfortunates.

In the course of the ages, they developed, employing immense resources, occupying the activities of numerous societies whose name of *religious orders* shows that they were closely bound to charity as a form of worship.

The guest-houses, which were so often near the chapels of the great Orders, welcomed the traveller, who in those days was almost always a poor man, by force of circumstances, in times difficult for communication. And did not this signify: Pass, Lord, from one of Your domains to another, on this earth whereon love has made You a traveller, whereon Your brothers by adoption take Your place! Our love will be proud to receive You, although we are *not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under our roof!*

Look at the fresco of Angelico which stands over a gate of the cloister at the convent of St. Mark in Florence, showing a traveller with the face of Christ, and two young monks, one of whom hastens to relieve Him of His staff, while the other gently draws Him within, and both exchange looks with Him which mean "We know the traveller for Thee, Master," and "Yes, children, and I take what you are doing as done for Myself."

All travellers, including foreigners, reaped the benefit of these feelings, which doubtless the mediocrity or forgetfulness of individuals might easily spoil or overshadow, but which at the very least were present in the things, even if they did not actuate the persons.

Everywhere it is related that miracles have been the reward of this worship in action; that Christ actually appeared where hearts had served Him in His living representative; that Christopher the ferryman one day ferried the Child Jesus, thinking that he was ferrying a poor child; that Elizabeth of Hungary, and afterwards Elizabeth of Portugal had seen bread or gold change into roses in the folds of their mantle so that they should not be discovered in their good works. Was it not the spiritual perfume of love that these roses hailed? Martin the catechumen gave away half his mantle, and on the following night the Lord appeared to him surrounded with angels, draped in the divided cloak, and saying: "Martin, who is yet only a catechumen, has clothed Me with this garment."

Do we wonder that artistic tradition, the faithful mirror, especially at these epochs, of universal feeling, has persisted in representing St. Martin, who later on did such great things, in this first simple act of his respecting the divided mantle? It is because art, when it remains in contact with the collective soul, which causes its real greatness, says much in a few words. Here it says: Love is everything. Love deserves universal celebrity. Love avails for the apostolate, for the conversion of peoples, for the healing of societies, as this man

healed them. Love avails for all and contains all, because it is the religion of religion, the essence of good and the soul of exterior works. *"Love, and do what you will."*

To-day, as always, those who wish to go to Christ ought not to forget that the poor man is a road; that to love Christ is to be disposed to prove that love in regard of His members; that the expectation of thanks from Him is a reason for being attached to what He substitutes for Himself; to touch, like the Canaanite woman, from behind, His extension in humanity, the living garment which He lets float towards us and from which virtue goes out.

But we must consider an aspect of this doctrine which might be said to be ignored by many, and sometimes by the best—the best, I mean, in respect of their good will, though that good will forgets to be far-reaching enough.

If alms be a sacrament, as being a sign of our union between ourselves and with Christ, and a means of perfecting this union, let us remember that we have said of the sacraments, and in particular of the first of them all, the Eucharist, that their aims are social, and that it is fitting that the unity and universality of the Church should be found in their effects.

The Eucharist has for its purpose to incorporate all of us together into Christ, since it is a *communion:* and all of us together, not just as a flock, but in accordance with the form of relations which befits our nature in respect to the supernatural, namely, as constituted in one Church, a Church which is governed and universal.

If it be indeed true that alms, in its turn, is intended to unite us to Christ all together, it is also necessary that it should join us together organically, socially. And it will follow that alms properly so called, which gives relief privately from man to man or from a man to small associations of men, is only one part, and the smallest part, of this lesser sacrament which we are studying. It will be necessary to enlarge and organise it, to make it social.

It will be necessary for the kings or heads of the state not to be content with having the poor at their table, which, moreover, is a fashion of the past; but for them to govern with an eye to the poor and disinherited as well as to the better part of their people. It will be necessary also for individuals not to limit their vision to the misery of their neighbours, at the hospital which assigns them one hour a week; but to understand the wider misery, that of the social body, and that which arises from the fact that the social body is not yet entirely evolved, or fixed in forms of life which ensure the best distribution of its blood among its members.

Social work in the modern sense, fruitful, creative, in place of that stopping of perpetually renewed holes which our good

deeds sometimes represent, this will be the natural and final issue of alms, of the distribution through the deacon, of house-to-house collections, of the divided mantle and the building of the hospital, though these forms will always continue to be necessary.

To wish that all the members of Christ, especially those who are inferior in knowledge, in education, in well-being, in legitimate independence, in happiness, may obtain what they lack, and live also, one day, in the great life of humanity : and that this result from organisation, legislation, the working of the great wheels which move the whole complicated machine of human relations; to wish this with one's whole heart and soul, to aid those who work for it, to bring to them that assistance of public opinion which is so necessary for everything to-day; and after that the assistance of speech, of action, of resources, that all, in one degree or another, can furnish; this is the sacrament of alms in full blossom, rendered more *efficacious,* as well as more *significant,* set on the level of its whole subject-matter, men, not men considered one by one, set by set, but in their organic unity, as it is or as it can be constituted.

In fine, if this spirit, one day, were to spread; if it gained those cold regions where the love of the Saviour does not throb; if, in a dream, we supposed the *one fold* and *one shepherd* of the Gospel had arrived, their hands stretched out towards one another, their hearts united and their minds eager to utilise the best means of action, ready to fix the lever, in the name of heaven, on the fulcrum which permits of moving the world, that would mean that humanity was saving itself and, as it were, by itself, since it would be doing so by means of its Incarnate Head.

When it had conquered the evil of the ages; when it had dressed the wounds of the collective Christ, had thrown aside the mantle of ignorance which it wore on its shoulders to hide from it the existence of its blemishes, inferiorities and miseries, such a humanity could turn to God, and with a kingly gesture, presenting to Him the result of its effort, say : Take, Father, for these are Thine own gifts, and if only because of that, they are less unworthy; but they are quite worthy of Thee, because they are united to the living Gift which Thou hast made to us, Thy Christ, in whose name, like an army and a family, we have together conquered evils, slain misery, developed our powers, raised up life, the holy life which Thou wishest to exalt in Thyself. Take it; it is the completion of Thy Creation. Now the end of time may come, for here is Thy eternal plan; *All subject to the elect, and the elect to Christ, and Christ to God.*

Funiculus triplex difficile rumpitur; a threefold cord is not

quickly broken. God, man, and Christ, their intermediary, ought, in unity, to make up life, the whole of life; individual life, social life, and what is more, universal life, by incorporating, through civilisation, matter with spirit, as spirit with God.

Ritual alms, in its humility, signifies these high things. It plaits the threefold cord. And in this is found its religious as well as its human value.

Those who wish to take away this higher signification from our relationships are working simply to divide us. By denying Christ, the bond of the human sheaf, they scatter the stalks in all directions. The soil strewn and the grain trampled underfoot by the competition which arises from the struggle for life, this is what tends to succeed to the mass of ears which mounts in a proud tuft above the sanctified earth. The great consciousness of all men which the Son of Man has awakened to love can then do nothing but dissolve into egoism, and the hallucination of the *I* must extinguish in man unconscious of God the outline of the unitary vision.

Leave man to be a brother of Christ and a sacramental thing for his companions in existence. Do not make him drunk with foolish pride, or, in place of the brother's cloak divided in the name of the Lord, throw over his shoulders, by interested flatteries, the purple of the political prætorium, and the sceptre of a reed.

The great Christian almsgiving is no more the limited, though holy, act with which we began; it is social justice, and that obtained by the love of men, enfolded by Christ in the love of God.

CHAPTER V

HOLY WATER

SINCE the *sacramental rites* employed by the Church are presented to our thought as annexes of the sacraments, it is natural that we should see certain of them approach more or less closely to one sacrament in particular, and seek to preserve, to bring about, and in part to renew its effects.

Such is, in regard to baptism, the office of the sanctifying element which we call holy water.

The symbolism of baptism, and in general the use of water in religious rites, has appeared to us to be justified by the most natural and most profound of thoughts.

Water purifies, water fecundates, water quenches thirst. Water, which is the life of nature, is our life also for a thousand reasons, some very evident, others more hidden, but divined by universal instinct before knowledge set its seal upon them.

It seems true that the bottom of the seas saw the origins of life. In leaving the watery element, aerial or terrestrial organisms brought it with them and made of it their " interior environment " to an extent which it is not easy to define. Take away the water from our body, and nothing remains but a heap of ashes, so that the threat *Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return* appears to have for its antithesis the promise of the Gospel : *He that believeth in Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water . . . unto eternal life.*"[1]

The old theories of Thales, the echo of eastern traditions, which make all beings come from water, are only the excess of a natural truth which may be transformed, symbolically, into a religious truth.

Moreover, all religions have admitted this element to the honours of worship, whether to adore it, as the Egyptians their Nile-God, or to introduce it into ceremonies of purification, as did the greater number of the peoples of antiquity.

Now, ought Christianity to reject a precious symbol because it has been used before? Is it not rather a reason for recognising its utility, and that without fear of paganism—since in such treatment of natural objects and primitive signs, everyone is a pagan—and for making use of it for the purposes of the Christian faith?

In Judaism, whence Christianity arose, sprinkling with water was practised, as well as ablutions before worship. The celebrated receptacle called the *sea of brass,* placed in the Temple beside the altar of burnt offerings, was a collective

[1] John vii. 38, and iv. 14.

holy-water stoup. The spring of Siloe, from which water was drawn with vessels of gold on the day of the Feast of Tabernacles, was called the *spring of salvation,* because there was attributed to it symbolically the effusion of the Holy Spirit when the Messias should come.

Complete ablution, or baptism, had always been practised. John the Forerunner renews it by giving it a signification of penance, on the eve of the manifestation of Jesus.

The Saviour Himself, obedient to the customs of His people, to all that is human, descended religiously into the Jordan and submitted to the symbolic signs that were to mark His consecration as Messias.

In the story of the Creation, the sacred writer, apparently alluding to the ancient cosmogonies, said : *And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,* that is to say, to make them fruitful. So the Holy Spirit, manifested at the Baptism of Jesus, moves upon the face of the baptismal water in order to make it engender life; not bodily life this time, but the life of the soul, the symbol used by the Spirit having power over the spirit; all the waters of the earth, say our authors, being set apart by the initiative of Christ to fulfil a new religious rôle, in conformity with His new and definitive doctrines.

The round world washed with the waters of oceans and rivers, souls washed with the Holy Spirit and symbolically bedewed by lustral water, such is the symbol set before us.

After this a Francis of Assisi has twofold reason to praise "our sister water, who is very useful, humble, precious and pure."

In the first days of the Church, the religious use of water seemed to be confined to baptism alone. As a reaction against Pharisaic formalism, it was not desired to multiply exterior rites. The baptismal water itself was moreover employed as it was, without any special blessing. Neither Jews nor pagans blessed water. It was purifying, they thought, by reason of its very nature. The symbol was therefore complete since it was not altered by a mixture of impurities.

Sometimes, in order better to mark the spiritual intention of baptism, to aid its efficacy by the influence of collective prayers of which the minister is the mouthpiece, it was thought good, first of all, at the beginning of the second century, in Africa, and then little by little everywhere, to pronounce over the baptismal fonts formulas such as the following, which is very ancient : *I bless thee, creature of water, by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God, by God Who in the beginning by the power of His Word separated thee from the dry element . . . by Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who by a wonderful sign of His power changed thee into wine*

at Cana; Whose feet walked upon thy surface; Who received by thee in the Jordan the baptism of water; Who made thee to issue forth together with Blood from His opened Side, and Who commanded His disciples to baptise in thee those who should believe.[1]

On the other hand, since a thing is preserved by the same means as have gained it, yet since baptism is not repeated, the Church was naturally invited to institute, in imitation of Judaism and pious paganism, what might be called *lesser baptism,* that is to say aspersion and the accessory purifications, giving to them as their signification the effusion of the Holy Ghost no longer in its initial and indispensable character, that is incorporation with Christ; but because it plunges us daily into that Life of our life and makes us participate in it more and more.

Every mother nourishes the children she bears. Since we are born of water and of the Spirit, of water quickened by the Spirit, we can be helped by it, at the request of that Mother in whom the Spirit is socialised and who is the channel of its action—the Church.

There is this difference then between the secondary rite and the sacrament, that the one gives the state of grace, while the other presupposes it, or is in any case subordinate to it.

In taking holy water, we do not expect to obtain the divine friendship; but if we have it not, the interior good will which accompanies this pious act can dispose us towards it. If we have it, it helps it to grow, and all this with the peculiar efficacy which arises from the institution, from the prayer pronounced with authority over this element when it is consecrated to our use, and also, for the benefit of each of our acts, from their connection with other acts proceeding from the same spirit, in the unity of the Church.

The sound-chamber improves the tone of the stringed instrument. Our religious group has also a sounding-apparatus, thanks to its organisation. When a rite unites us, in the name of an approved tradition, to this collective soul, our feelings acquire a value which comes to them from the *communion of saints,* that is to say from our brotherhood in Christ, a value which increases all our individual values, as association always does.

We ought not, then, to be astonished at hearing a great bishop of antiquity call holy water "a sacrosanct thing, a thing worthy of veneration, a thing full of mystery."

It is sacrosanct because it proceeds from the Spirit of sanctity diffused in the Church, the Spirit which seeks by all means, small and great, to manifest Itself in our hearts in order to conquer evil, to nourish good, to prepare eternal life in them.

[1] Preface for the Blessing of the Font.

It is a thing worthy of veneration by reason of its antiquity and its universal connections, seeing that as it is present in all systems of worship, it is bound to the human heart at its deepest; seeing that it is moreover a thing specially Judeo-Christian, and finally quite Christian, and from long ago connected with the institution and personal practice of the Saviour.

It is a thing full of mystery by reason of the numerous symbols which it evokes. We have mentioned several of them, but it is necessary to add those which arise from the new elements which are introduced into it, in the ceremonies of its consecration.

Indeed, the holy water of the Christians is not used in a pure form, as it often was in antiquity. For ordinary use, salt is added, as if to compose a serum which preserves, stimulates, guards at the same time against both weakness and corruption, gives to our life the savour which edifies our neighbour and pleases God, and unites us to our brothers by that sign of hospitality which salt was in old time. When we enter a church and offer each other holy water, we renew the old act of offering bread and salt to our guests.

When baptismal water is being prepared, the oil of catechumens is added to it; the symbol of the combats which the Christian must sustain for Christ's sake, of the light which he receives and ought to pass on, of the sweetness which is shown to him and which he ought to show, of the recovery or preservation of health that grace procures.

When the catechumens of the first ages, meeting in the catacombs, prepared themselves simultaneously for baptism and for martyrdom, such a symbol had a very special *raison d'être;* but the daily martyrdom of a holy life is a sufficient justification for it.

The holy chrism is joined to it also, recalling the Magdalene's perfume, to signify the good odour of virtues.

For the consecration of churches, one of the most imposing ceremonies that exists, the holy water used is mixed with ashes, as in ancient Egypt, or as at Jerusalem at the time of the sacrifices. This is done to recall to man the humility of his condition and the shortness of his life, to make him bend before the Majesty which is willing to enter into religous relations with him, to cause him to think with love of Him who for his sake was made for him and with him ashes and dust, to remove from him, by these thoughts, the sole interior obstacle to his moral life—pride. I mean pride in its radical sense, man's refusal to submit to God's law, his will to keep himself for himself, thus exalting himself above everything. That pride, with its two main branches, voluptuousness or pride of the flesh and haughtiness, pride of the mind, is the

whole tree of evil which has to be uprooted. In the emptiness of self presupposed by humility, nothingness disappears and makes way for the Infinite, whose grace gives all to everyone who recognises that of himself he has nothing.

But because extremes lie always in wait for man's mind, unbalanced as it is by original sin; because pride changes, by reaction, into gloomy discouragement, fatal to energetic effort; to ashes, the symbol of humility, the Church joins a symbol of moral vigour, courage and joy. It pours wine into the water of consecration. The wine *which rejoiceth the heart of man,* as the Scriptures say, which has been given to earth, as some old authors assured us, to replace the tree of life; *vinum a vi dictum,* said Varro, as if its etymology were *strength,* is a symbol useful to upraise the mind after it has bowed to the ashes.

Pascal saw one of the proofs of the divinity of religion in this, that it only abases man so as to raise him up the better, that it only raises him up after having taken care to abase him, thus avoiding both stoic pride and sceptic discouragement. Let us congratulate the Church, then, because her liturgy recalls her teaching.

Besides, she does not forget that her divine Master compared Himself to a vine, whereof we are the branches. Thus He uses the modest and drooping vine, through which runs a generous and exquisite sap, to represent the outpouring of divinity into humanity.

All these symbols, were we better penetrated with their liturgical significance, better acquainted with the texts where they are commented on, would produce in us an impression of sublimity which would repel very completely that human respect with which some people are seized at the moment of putting their fingers in a stoup or sprinkling a tomb, as if they were performing a mummery.

Read, in the *Liturgical Prayer* of Dom Cabrol, some of the prayers relating to the blessing of water or its use; and you will see that they are penetrated with the most magnificent and moving poetry, rich in nature and humanity, rich in reflected divinity; and you will derive from them the taste for these rites which seem dull to dullards, superstitious to those who have not understood their ends, but are admirable in the spirit of their institution, that is to say in themselves.

In each of its uses, holy water particularises and adapts its general signification.

On going into the church, it invites the user to purify himself from profane thoughts and to become recollected.

In the house, it suggests the sanctification of our intimate life, of the daily actions in which more than in the world or

in politics our life really consists. It brings to it the hope of daily help, and this in addition to the periodic helps offered to the Christian life by the sacraments.

When sprinkled on our houses, our goods, objects we use, it signifies, "Lord, grant that we may use these temporal things in such wise that we do not forget those that are eternal."

Used as an accessory in the administration of the sacraments properly so called, it plays a preparatory part, unless it belong to the matter, as in solemn baptism.

Among the Easterns, the faithful drink a few drops of it at their meal on the day of the Epiphany, whereon among them the blessing of the water takes place, and in what is thus taken life itself is meant to be symbolically spiritualised.

When given to one who is sick, holy water applies to him the collective prayer that is made for him, and if he is conscious impresses the thought of it before him to help him use his sufferings for a Christian purpose, and to mitigate them, if it be God's will.

To sprinkle a dead person is to wish him refreshment and light. It is to say to him: God bless thee, brother who hast left us; may He purify thy soul from the filthiness of earth; may He make eternal life flower in thee in place of the days of thy weakness; may He assure thee of our brotherly love and bring us together again.

Holy water thus returns in every fashion to the sacramental idea. In making use of material elements, we wish to help them to fulfil their purpose, which is to stimulate the mind; to second, instead of impeding, the ascent of the soul; to bear us up to God, who is no less their Creator than ours, and who created the hierarchy of beings in His universe to help them to ascend, having regard to the destiny of the elect.

All can be summed up in this prayer, for the benefits of which every Christian ought earnestly to hope:

"O God, who in the wonderful ordering of Thy scheme hast willed by means of things insensible to show forth the scheme of our salvation; grant, we beseech Thee, to the devout hearts of Thy faithful people a saving understanding of the mystical meaning of this act. Amen."[1]

[1] Preface for the Blessing of Palms.

CHAPTER VI

BLESSINGS

ALL the objects of which we make use, all things animate or inanimate which are brought by providence into relation with our life, are intended to make way for the rule of creative ends in our case, that is to say, to collaborate for our happiness, in this world and the next.

We ourselves, through all the activities of our inward and outward life, have the same purpose : we must help towards our own happiness. And assuredly, we have an irresistible will to do so; but how often do our aberrations, whether culpable or unconscious, make us our own enemies, just as things directed against us by chance or by hostile wills, human or superhuman, become opposed to us, vex us or tempt us, act as a screen to prevent us from seeing God instead of reflecting Him; play the part of obstacles and cast us down instead of ladders for us to ascend.

This reversal of life's values is at the bottom of all our misfortunes, temporal and spiritual. It would be necessary to redress everything, to save everything from accidents, to set everything free from unhappy or perverse influences, so as to make it again enter into the creative plan and, as is fitting, to direct matter towards mind, mind towards intellectual progress, and all towards God, whose will it is to receive all after He has launched all on the perilous, but meritorious and fruitful adventure of existence.

This is clearly the end of all religious effort, and in particular of the sacraments, the chain stretched between us and Christ who draws us towards God by a progressive redemption.

But since, once more, the sacraments have things annexed to them which prolong and particularise their action, we ought not to be astonished at discovering that there are rites intended to set things as well as persons towards the good and towards happiness, by minting, so to say, the benefit of the Incarnation for them under the administration of the Church.

Such is the rôle of blessings.

The word blessing, or benediction, comes from *bene dicere,* to speak good, to say favourable things, to invoke or to acknowledge benefits.

In the religious and sacramental order, to bless signifies to invoke upon us, directly or by means of things, that which Christ has merited for us, that which has been prepared for us in the measure of our dispositions and of the providence which guides us, that which it has been decided to give us

through those natural mediators, the members of our hierarchy, representing at the same time both Christ who hearkens and ourselves who implore, whose hands are uplifted, since they are human and fraternal, and turned downwards, inasmuch as they are divine through institution, and instruments consecrated in the name of Christ, to be the channels of His graces.

On God's side, blessings are themselves actual benefits. What God says is what He does. What He says favourably (*bene dicere*) is what He does in our favour.

The word of God, which is in no way exterior to Him, which is His very thought, His creative and governing thought, and consequently also His action, since thought and action in God are not distinguished; the word of God becomes then, in its realisation, the form which events and the actual arrangement of things will take.

All things exist because God said them, *Dixit et facta sunt;* He Himself exists so far as He says Himself, since His word is His proper reality.

The Word of God is a substantial benediction in God. He communicates it to us through Christ. He imparts its benefits to us, in correlation with our life, by means of those partial benedictions, His daily benefits. And if He subordinates them in part to our action, our prayers and the religious hierarchy, it is in the first case in order that we may be the children of our works; in the second, that we may draw near to Him through this ascension of the soul; in the third, that the hierarchy hold us all together, that is to say keep us in association, like brothers united in His name.

The celebrated fresco called the Dispute of the Blessed Sacrament, wherein the Heavenly Father, blessing with a priestly and tender gesture, occupies the summit of the composition, having beneath Him Christ, with His assessors; lower again, the Spirit communicated, with His reflection in the Gospels; lower still, the hierarchy representing the Church and disputing about the Real Presence so as to determine its use, is a very complete graphic representation of the descent and diffusion of the divine blessings.

It is not necessary to repeat that every benediction must invoke Christ. If this is not done in words it will be in act, and the object or the person will be signed with the sign of the cross, recalling Jesus the Redeemer.

Sometimes incense is used, to mark the intensity and the solemnity of the prayer; to give it the exquisite odour which the merits of the Saviour communicate.

The first objects of benediction, if we are considering inanimate things, will be things consecrated to worship. These are destined to our good in a special sense, and they

may well be appropriated thereto by a religious act to set them apart from profane use. They will be *sanctified* in the etymological sense of the word, that is to say they will be *separated* for sacramental uses, the capability of fulfilling which they will receive from a deputed authority, which proceeds always from Christ through His true representative.

Thus are churches and their foundation-stones blessed, in anticipation of the Real Presence.

Thus sacred vessels and altar-stones are blessed with a benediction which prepares them for the better blessing of contact with what is divine.

In the same way are blessed symbolic ornaments, each of which speaks of an aspect of religion, recalls a duty and speaks to a soul of its hopes.

We bless the matter of unction, with a view to its use in the administration of baptism, of confirmation, of the last sacraments. We bless lustral water, palms, the Paschal candle, organs.

Cemeteries, religious images in public places, objects of personal devotion are blessed. And all these blessings are called *consecratory*.

Since the eighth century—and it is indeed surprising that it was not thought of sooner[1]—bells have been blessed in the same manner. The humble metal which has to play the part of a voice of the Church, to call the dispersed faithful to prayer, to announce the preaching of the Gospel, to act as prelude to the Holy Sacrifice, to intone the common canticle of our adoration, and at the same time of a voice of God, to utter appeals from on high, the inward necessity of thanksgiving, the violence of remorse, the sweet invitation of hope; this humble thing, so mighty in its utilisation, must be assigned to its function in a solemn manner. So for this purpose there has been arranged a sort of baptism, as if for a living being with a glorious destiny. It is decorated and symbolically anointed; we wish that its accents may share the sweetness of the silver trumpets spoken of in the Book of Numbers, or, if necessary, the loudness of the trumpets of Jericho, to cast down the ramparts of our hearts.

Beside these things consecrated for pious uses, all those met with in common life are blessed, houses and beds, fields, seedtime and harvest, domestic animals, bread and other foods, all the products of industry; ships, railways, telegraphs, telephones, aeroplanes, works of art, public fountains, monuments, factories, schools, hospitals, mines and workshops, etc.; all patriotic emblems; flags, banners, swords or uniforms; and also the earth, the sea, roads, rivers, canals, all the places in which man moves, seeking his livelihood and fearing dangers. Lastly, the ritual contains bene-

[1] The use of bells in the East dates at least from the sixth century.

dictions *ad omnia,* for all things, so as to include even the things which are forgotten, and to suffer nothing in fact to lack religious consecration.

Persons, who, by reason of their moral consciousness, are things to be governed; who have to be drawn towards God by a sort of pressure to which they consent, since we have in us both a fear and a need of the divine; persons are also the subject of blessings.

Infants are blessed at their birth and on various feasts, as well as their mothers at churching. Betrothed and newly-married persons are blessed, travellers on setting out and coming home, missionaries and pilgrims, the sick and the dying, assemblies as well as isolated individuals; in a word, all those who find it well to unite themselves, by an expressive and active sign, to the source of those spiritual goods which bring in their train sooner or later all others; namely, to Incarnate God, God taking flesh in man and in his prolongation, nature, in order that nature and man may take hold of God.

As for the minister of blessings, he is, most often, any priest ordained by the Church; but the blessing of a Bishop and that of a priest at the end of Mass have always been considered by tradition as enjoying special prerogatives, and it is these in particular which it is customary to call *sacramentals.*

The reason, as far as the Bishop is concerned, is clear. It is that the successor of the Apostles possesses, like the Twelve, the fulness of the sacerdotal office conferred by Jesus.

The power of the simple priest is of wonderful efficacy and magnitude, but it is limited. The Bishop's power is full. The Pope himself is from this point of view only the first of his brethren. If the jurisdiction of the first shepherd and that of the pastor of a diocese are very unequal, their power of order is identical. Whence it follows that their benediction is placed on the same footing from the sacramental point of view, although the papal benediction is received with greater honour.

Both, in any case, have always been in the Church the object of a reverence that is justified, because the full priesthood participates at the maximum in that power of intercession which St. Paul attributes to Christ when he says: We have a high priest *who is able to save perfectly those who come to God by Him* (Heb. vii. 25).

Is it not indeed ordinarily the case in every organisation that the goods which are properly social are obtained through the social authorities, and this all the more the higher the power involved? Our spiritual treasures are not exceptional. They come to us through intermediaries; Christ always, His ministers usually. God dispenses them and makes them

trickle down like those perfumes of Aaron, whereof the Psalm speaks, which covered his head and ran down his venerable beard, even to the skirts of his clothing.

When the pastor faces his flock, standing on the steps of the altar, with mitre and staff, with wide golden cope, recalling those pictures of the early artists in which our Lady envelops a whole religious order or the whole Church in the folds of her azure mantle; his breast adorned with the cross, his body veiled in white linen, mysteriously hiding its materiality, the stole hanging down in sign of humility and power; everyone bending down before the majesty of the propitiatory action; then the saying of Jesus, *Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of you,* acquires an almost dramatic meaning.

Is it not the Saviour Himself, whose eternal priesthood is here represented not only by the consecrated person, but by the whole scene round about him; by this costume, Eastern, Roman, modern, which belongs to all times as does Christ to all ages; drawing himself up to his full height in his lofty head-dress, displaying riches which will soon melt away in the magnificent humility of what he says?

Look at him, this representative of Christ, now speaking. Is he going to perform an act of personal pride, of corporate pride, glorying, in his own name or in that of the hierarchy, in an almost miraculous power on which the salvation of the multitude depends?

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, he says.

And the people reply, *Who made heaven and earth,* adding to these lofty words a new dimension. It is the breadth coming down from on high. The mystic pyramid is set up : prayer has only to ascend it.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, continues the pontiff. It is the desire that He from whom the divine good things proceed may first of all receive them. It is the lesson of the *Pater noster* repeated : *Hallowed be Thy name!* before the demand for bread, even the bread of the soul.

Then, raising his hand which bears the symbolic gem, the ring of the mystical marriage he has contracted with his Church, with two fingers down, leaving three to express the Trinity, making three great crosses over all the people, as if using the name of the Trinity to insist on sending forth the person of Him who saves as the forerunner of his own humility, he says, not *I bless you,* which he might do as a real representative, but *The Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be with you.*

At the Mass, this last wish is realised almost to the letter, and the intermediary is effaced more and more. The priest in

act of sacrificing is almost another Christ. Does he not say, as he bends over the sacramental species, voluntarily mingling history with the eternal mystic reality, *This is My body?*

When afterwards he turns round, and blesses the assembly with that hand still impregnated with mysteries, may not one think that somewhat of the beneficent virtue which went forth from the divine Master must now be outpoured to heal, console and sanctify us, if we are prepared for it?

This is especially true when the blessing is given with the Blessed Sacrament itself. In this case, the minister is hidden, and no longer counts at all. Speech, however humble, is no longer in place. The liturgy demands silence, both on the part of the congregation and on that of the priest. *Let all flesh,* says the prophet, *be silent before the face of the Lord* (Zach. ii. 13).

The Christian ought then to remember that we also must bless God for blessing us, who blesses us every day by giving us all that we have, who blesses us directly, who blesses us sacramentally by His hierarchy, who speaks through it and by Himself, and His gifts come to us.

Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, cries St. Paul, *who has blessed us with every spiritual benediction, in heavenly places!* (Eph. i. 3).

In this last phrase we find the lesson with which we began. It is with a view to heaven that every spiritual or temporal blessing is bestowed upon us.

When we bow down for the blessings of the Church, we must remember that life is nothing but this—for God, an enterprise of glory and love; for us, an enterprise of salvation; and that to bless God by asking that He may bless us through Christ, is to wish before all things for the realisation of an eternal plan in which our temporal desires take their place, but according to an order of subordination demanded first of all from our hearts by Him who wills to fill them to the full.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

ONE of the sacramental signs which is most mingled with religious life, most frequent in the liturgy, and for that reason most habitual to the Christian, who likes to turn his daily life itself into a sort of liturgy, as though a divine service, is assuredly the sign of the cross.

Met with in practice at every turn, this simple and familiar but dramatic sign seems intended to carry out the bidding of the Apostle : *Whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Col. iii. 17).

For this reason, we like to think that the sign of the cross goes back to the Apostles themselves. History is not far from proving this, since it traces this symbol as far back as the second century, and already at that epoch it was considered as the sign of the Christian, the seal which in the Apocalypse marks the foreheads of the *servants of God,* and this invites us to go back even further, to the very first start of the Christian era.

The manner of making the sign of the cross has undergone variations the course of which is very obscure. Things which are very popular easily follow divergent roads, and the symbolism of this sign, when the attempt was made to define it, was interpreted in various ways.

The making of the sign of the cross on the forehead seems to have been the common practice until the fourth century, and it signified the seal, the visible mark, the label shown by the Christian to prove that he was not ashamed or afraid. In a hostile environment such as the pagan surroundings of the first centuries, when the cross was an object of derision or hatred, such a gesture had a lofty significance, since it might lead to martyrdom. Towards the end of the fourth century, we see the custom spread which we still practise at Mass at the beginning of the Gospel, the signing of oneself on the forehead, lips and heart, for the sanctification of thoughts, words and desires.

It is only in the eighth century that we meet with the sign of the cross made over all of the body, for the sanctification of the whole man.

In Spain, in the thirteenth century, a curtailed form of crossing oneself was adopted. It consisted in signing the face from forehead to chin, no doubt to mark the five senses.

As for making the sign of the cross over things, it seems as old as the earliest use; and this can easily be understood, since things for our use are a continuation, an instrumental adjunct of the person, and on the other hand, through making

the sign of the cross on himself, a man was naturally invited, when he exercised any authority, to make it on others, and by extension on their property.

In all these cases the Christian sign was traced in primitive times with one finger alone. Later, it was made with two or three, to recall the Trinity or to protest against the heresy of the Monothelites. Lastly, the custom of employing the whole hand arose.

The direction of the hand also varied. Upward and downward movement was unavoidable, but then one could go either from right to left or from left to right. Some preferred to end with the right side, in memory of Christ seated *at the right hand of the Father.* Others chose the left, the better to recall the Crucifixion, for they supposed that the right hand was first nailed, then the left.

Our forefathers very readily became attached to such details, because symbolism had a real value for them in their lives. We are inclined rather to a dry rationalism, and see in this nothing but an archæological curiosity.

However this may be, the general signification of the act is always the same. It serves to mark our possessions and ourselves for the service of the Cross, that is, to declare by an expressive sign that we remember our Saviour, His rule over us, His teaching and example, and above all His Passion.

Thus it gives our life a Christian significance, by insisting on one aspect of that life which, though essentially transitory, is none the less the most difficult part of it to accept without murmuring—pain.

The cross freely made upon oneself means the acceptance of life and its daily or exceptional sufferings, including death, in the name of Christ; it is a prayer for and an anticipation of the victory of the spirit over the flesh, of eternity over time, since the moral life is our taking possession of the eternal in intention, as the life beyond is taking possession of it in fact.

Christ gave Himself to be crucified—for it is He Himself who climbed the ladder of pain, *ascendit crucem*—Christ, the universal Man, took on Himself all human suffering in order to give it to God in expiation and in merit, to make it attain its goal, the right hand of the Father, which means self-conquest and dominion over all things, regained though we are left the slaves of all things, slaves, in the first place, of our own erring and scattered ego, abandoned to the *law of the members.*

Whoever piously makes the sign of the Cross in order to unite himself to his Redeemer ought to remember that to unite himself, an individual human being, to the Universal Man as the Man of Sorrows, is to accept sorrow for himself also.

How many things, in life, are in the form of the Cross!

One might say that it is present in all things, and that the world is a globe through which runs a sword with Cross-like hilt.

Is not man himself made in the form of a cross, with arms outstretched towards all things, never attaining the full object of his search, his feet riveted to an ungrateful soil, ever attempting to lift his head beneath its bundle of thorns? The cross was modelled on man's body, and he feels it fastened to his shoulders whenever he writhes with pain.

But when the Christian wishes to enter into the redemptive plan by working out his own salvation, to unite to his divine Brother, he braces himself like Christ to a generous acceptance. He rests on his cross, standing, bidden thereto by that upright bed of heroes and martyrs.

After all, man only has members in order to be crucified on earth. The flesh exists for the spirit, and the flesh only works for the spirit by suffering. The wax must melt in order that the candle may burn. *To suffer or to die*—that phrase of St. Teresa which is thought of as a mystical utterance, taken broadly, is only the Christian philosophy of life.

In acts of public worship, the sign of the Cross has naturally a more special signification. It means: All salvation comes through the Cross; for from the Cross flows the stream of grace into which the liturgy is meant to make us enter; *the road which runs,* as Pascal would say, *and leads us whither we want to go.*

When by this sign we explicitly recall the source of sacramental graces, our intention is to strengthen them; we piously desire to stamp the idea of them in our minds so that we may be ready to receive them; we know that the institution is in itself efficacious, through the application of the collective prayers and common merits of which we partake.

In ordinary life, which is not destitute of the sacramental principle, seeing that it is the Church, in its essence, which is sacramental, and so in all its functions and all its life, which are ours—in daily life, I say, the sign of the Cross indicates precisely that everything in the life of the Christian is itself Christian, and attempts to secure that it may be truly so with the efficacy which admittedly belongs to it.

The rising and setting, birth and death of that life which each day is in miniature; food, which is the support of that life and must therefore take its meaning; work, which seeks its advancement, and so is also qualified by its end and ruled by its motives; relationships, which mean its diffusion in a mental and moral atmosphere from which it neither can nor ought to be isolated, and which also it is very necessary to put in unison at the moment of our having to do with them; the sign of the Cross supernaturalises all these. It is made

over a bed, as the Christians did in the time of Tertullian; over the bread which is eaten or over the table at which we sit down, a custom which is unhappily disappearing; over the earth which is being tilled, as the peasants did for so long in the lands of faith; at the beginning of any act done in common; contract, oath, discussion, fights, games, travels, enterprises and the rest.

All this starts from one inspiring idea and tends to the same end. We hope God will be so good as to accept this sign of our adhesion to Christ and His Cross, to communicate its blessings to us, to guard us, help us, unite us, urge us to our end through the bitter experiences of life.

The Christian approaches the universal reality Cross in hand, like Christ, and like Christ he hopes to overcome it. *In hoc signo vinces;* through this Sign thou shalt conquer. Thou shalt conquer nature, which providence, through the Cross, urges in the direction of creative ends; thou shalt conquer thyself, who art nature also, often shipwrecked and in storm; thou shalt conquer time which devours thee and compel it to run into eternity, the ocean into which the water-clock causes the minutes to fall drop by drop; thou shalt conquer God Himself, by the violence of love which the love of His Son who died for us inflicts upon Him.

Thou, O conquering sign, hast only to find the formula which binds thee to thine original Source of efficacy; that fulfils the meaning of the Creed by recalling the order of the mysteries to which thou art nearest, the Redemption proceeding from the Incarnation, and the Incarnation connected with the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The traditional words are not always added explicitly to the sign of the Cross; they may be understood, but they are always implied, and when one crosses oneself with some solemnity, though it be in private, the sign carries the words with it, so as to be completed by marking the connection of the Cross with the heights from which graces come down, as well as with the plains on which they are to be poured out.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This now means, we approach the Trinity by the Cross; the Trinity comes to us through the Cross; it is the bridge across the abyss dug by nothingness and sin. And that the Trinity may thus come to us, that It may draw us to Itself, mingling with our nothingness the fulness of the divine compensation, this is the entire satisfaction of all religious effort, since religion consists solely in this, in saving our little lives from their nothingness and from their native malice, extending to the absolute all their closely measured values, in giving to each of the steps of our whole career the noble meaning demanded by our aspirations.

So that the sign of the Cross fully understood is the whole of the religious life in a striking epitome.

In the Name of the Father, from whom all proceeds, in God and outside God; in the Name of the Son, His equal, of one substance with Him, but through Whom He is fruitful and a Saviour; in the Name of the Holy Spirit, their living Bond, their breath and their common pulse, through whom God communicates His virtue and makes Himself the Sanctifier; In the Name of the ineffable and sacred Trinity, I unite myself to the Cross which is the channel of graces, the lightning-conductor of evils, as lashed to the mast of the tossing ship which carries my eternal fortune.

And I say: O inward closeness of my God united to the humble inwardness of my life, be propitious to me! O earth and heaven mingled through the wood of the Cross, make of me the shoot which only draws from its roots that it may rise to the light and there spread out aloft as high as possible!

God who art present, God, who art loving, beside me, forgetful and weak man that I am, arouse me in spirit, in heart, in action to Thine invisible and active presence!

Unity of all things, manifested through Christ, Man and God, and ruled by a government so sublime that it can make itself present to the inmost heart without laying aside anything of its transcendence, that can come into contact with all humilities without its grandeur being diminished, that can become affectionate even to the point of foolishness in seeming while keeping its immensity, make me a sense of bewildering enfoldment, in which my nothingness finds somewhat that makes it divine!

Father and Son and Holy Ghost, mark me! Make Your sign upon me!

Let me, Father, be with Thee, the fruitful principle of my own destiny!

Let me, O Son, be in Thee, an outflow from the divine, recognising its source and its end; a river, begotten of the ocean, and returning thereto across the plains.

Let me be, O Spirit, like Thee, a sanctifying breath, a holy throb diffusing outwardly the inward overflow, and acquiring new strength for myself, since

> With the fire it sends forth is every soul consumed.

Let my head, my heart, my limbs work for thought, desire and action in accordance with Your model and Your influence, O Three, Three in One, as are thought, desire and action in myself.

Let my aims, my relationships, my material and spiritual attachments unite me to Thee and make of me a life divinised, and in consequence fundamentally humanised, since Thou, O

Creator, dost not absorb, but give to himself him who has known how to give himself to Thee in order to live the better.

Let my entire self, including all that my personality covers, whether living or lifeless, live, advance and die, pass, arrive and settle down, work, suffer and be for ever established in joy in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORD OF GOD

IN the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made. In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

As we want to treat of the Word of God in the liturgical sense, we cannot do better than go back thus to its source.

The liturgy, and in general all the sacramental life of the Church, has for its only end to bring us into connection with God through Christ. It uses diverse means to that end. One of them is the Word, the special function of which is to unite us to God according as He is Himself the Word, that is to say the Truth, in order that His truth may become in us what it is in Him, Life; and that this Life may be *the Light of men.*

This inspiring expression, *the word of God,* is used for preaching, at once suggesting the sacramental—that is, the symbolic and effective—meaning attributed to it by Catholic thought.

We say *Word of God* (*parole de Dieu*) as in French we call a hospital a *House of God* (*Hôtel-Dieu*). We erect hospitals in God's name as we preach the Gospel in God's name; both are sanctified operations. And in the same way as we have attributed to Christian charity a sacramental character which connects it with the very centre of the Catholic liturgy, the Mass, by means of the *Offering,* so we must accord to the Christian preaching of the Word a sacramental meaning which makes it a continuation of that section of the Mass named *instruction,* comprising lections taken from Prophet, Epistle and Gospel, and their commentary, the sermon.

It is by reason of this connection that makers of sermons traditionally give a text at the beginning of their discourse, and end with *amen,* as in the prayers of the Mass.

To call this to mind, a crucifix is in most churches placed either in or opposite to the pulpit; over it the symbol of the Holy Spirit; under it the Apostles and the figures of the four evangelists to support it. Sometimes, notably at Paris, candles are lighted during the sermon to signify the *light of men.*

Though a man speaks outside the Church, apparently apart from all liturgical functions, since he is still a man of God, speaking the language of religion, he is still linked with the sacraments and is doing sacerdotal work.

If any priest speaks of science, sociology or literature, leaving these studies to themselves, without bringing them into the religious stream, without, at least indirectly, raising them up to Christ who is his end, he forgets the word of the Apostle: *I have not thought to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

To know Jesus Christ only does not mean ignorance of everything else! The letter killeth. One ought to know everything. But one's final aim in tackling science or any other sort of knowledge should be to bind oneself to Jesus crucified, that is to Jesus as Redeemer, the saving Mediator between all that is of man, that it may succeed at last, and God, who alone procures its success.

To restore all things in Christ—that is the end of the priesthood with regard to the Word, and everything else.

When the Apostles heard the command *Go and teach all nations* they did not set out like itinerant schoolmasters or savants or philosophers on a lecturing tour. They were messengers of a Divine Master. They declared what they had heard, not what they had discovered. They are represented as holding a book, a book shown sometimes, in miniatures, as under a veil, like a monstrance. Their words seemed to themselves utterances of the Spirit of God, an echo of His living Word. When they appealed to reason or to nature, it was because reason and nature also proceed from God and reveal His Word.

So when the preacher speaks in the Church, and particularly during the Mass—interrupting his sacred office as if Christ were waiting for him to make the hearts of men ready for His coming into them—clothed in the white vestments which attach him to the altar; the preacher, I say, speaks not as an orator, even if he is one; not as a philosopher or savant, though he may be one; not even as a private theologian; he speaks as one sent. A *mission;* that is the rôle he fulfils. His voice is not his own, it belongs to another, it belongs in the end to that divine Other, and the thought of its passing through human lips dismays the sinner who feels his insufficiency for such things.

"O crowd of hearers! What do you ask of me?" cried Lacordaire. Indeed, who are we, to climb steps, to rise up in our pulpits above everyone else, to claim the devout attention of which we are sometimes conscious? Have we, as men, anything to say which is worthy of this silence, when so many of our audience, it may be, could break it with far better right and more brilliant effect than ourselves?

Silence, the thrill of hearts which still their beatings, the crowds of thoughts and feelings that bend like ears of corn beneath the wind while the Word is passing; when the Christian orator asks himself why he should be the one to

stir that silence for a moment, and to keep it in awe in its humility so full of life, he can only reply with the Twelve: *I cannot refrain from speaking!* with Paul: *Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!*

But to justify himself, the hearer must say: Christian in fact or Christian in hope, I propose to draw nigh to God, and for that purpose, seizing this thin and trembling thread which runs towards me, I use it for my spirit and conscience to mount upwards.

The human preacher is a weak bond, but yet a bond between his auditory and God, through that other sublime Bond, the Man-God, and through the institution which is His extension to us, penetrated with His Spirit and charged with His mission throughout the ages, the Church.

Once more we see manifested the sacramental thread along which the religious goods that reach us regularly pass. The particular case of the Word merely specifies its method of operation in as far as the Word is concerned.

In the beginning was the Word: the creative Word, the origin of things, and so of the truth of things, since truth is only the relation between things as they are and our intelligence.

All that is true, in theory or in practice, is true then because God is, and God is true; because He is the living Word.

Whoever expresses truth expresses God, the Word, and utters therefore a word of God.

Religious truth is a particularly strong case of this, and must benefit by an antonomasis, in that it utters God not only as He is expressed by things and by the relations of things, that is to say by reflecting Him: but to the extent to which God is pleased to permit it, according also to what He is mysteriously in Himself.

Whoever expresses the mysterious truths of the Faith, or even others in so far as they are connected with these, whoever makes them clear, defends them, persuades men of them, and puts them into action, utters by so doing, in excellent fashion and in a spiritual sense, a word of God.

But in order that this office may be fulfilled with authority, it is necessary that those who perform it should be commissioned to do so, and that there should be a witness of the truth.

Our first witness is Christ, who is a witness in the fullest sense, as concerns the mystery, since, as He said to Nicodemus, *No man hath ascended into heaven save He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man,* WHO IS IN HEAVEN (John iii. 13).

Our Christ, even on earth, is in heaven, having in Himself

God and the Spirit of God. He is Himself the substantial Word which His Humanity reflects for us, in such wise that He has the right to say, even as man, knowing that the divine Missionary is in Him united to Him who sent Him : *I am the Light of the world.*

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, affirms the sublime evangelist.

But then, throughout the ages, and over the whole extent of the world, it is necessary that the witnessing should be transmitted, that the Christ-God should be represented. This is what is to be done by an institution to which it is said : *It is you who will give testimony of Me. Whoso heareth you heareth Me, and whoso despiseth you despiseth Me.*

The Church, united to Christ by that Holy Spirit which He has communicated to her and which is their common soul; the Church, the spiritual body whereof the Man-God is the head, the bride of whom He is the Bridegroom in the unity of one sole flesh, *duo in carne una;* she it is who is the permanent intermediary—I was going to say between Christ and us, but that is not enough, since Christ is in her and is inseparable from her. So we must say : she, the Church, is the intermediary, through Christ, between God and us.

That is why St. Augustine, after recalling the mystic unity in the Church of the Head and the members, the Bridegroom and the bride, cries out : " If they are two in one sole flesh, how should they not be two in one sole voice? Thus, then, the Church speaks when Christ speaks, and Christ speaks when the Church speaks. Allow Christ, then, to speak " (*in* Ps. xl.).

Lastly, the Church, which has her mission from Christ and from God, gives a mission to her ministers by that *ordination* which makes them consecrated subordinates, in as much as, among other sacramental rôles, they are put in charge of the sacrament of the Word.

Thus St. Paul, referring to the declaration of the Master, *Whoso heareth you heareth Me, and whoso despiseth you despiseth Me,* concludes : *Whoso despiseth the word of the apostle despiseth not man, but God Himself.*

Let us understand this clearly. We have to do with the apostle as an apostle, as a representative, and not in his own person. As a private person, an ambassador may be more or less esteemed; but to despise him as an ambassador, in the matter of his message, is to despise the government and the people he represents. So he who despises an apostle, by not receiving as from God what he communicates as from God, despises God and His holy people; he despises the Church whereof the Holy Spirit is the soul, whereof Christ is the Head. He sins then against Christ and against the

Spirit : in so far, we must hasten to add, as it is indeed they who are expressed by his mouth.

Indeed, we have no more to venerate the man in place of the preacher, than to venerate every word that falls from the preacher's lips.

The Word of God which in its origin is one, simple, perfect, identical with God Himself, is degraded in coming to us, and the more so the longer the chain becomes.

Christ is infallible still, although in Him the divine Word is humanised, so as to be reduced to our level. His earthly representative, the Pope, and the Church united to the Pope, are infallible in regard to certain things and under certain conditions, but outside these conditions and these subjects, they relapse into humanity and possible errors. The priest, their envoy, is deficient to a much greater extent, and at all times. He can err, he can fail to express his meaning, he may deserve disavowal by authority, just as authority itself, outside its definite domain and the conditions under which it participates in the divine absolute, may deserve to be disavowed by Christ.

But defect is not nothingness, and this relativity of the bond which, through the priest, the mouthpiece of an institution, attaches the faithful to eternal life, does not prevent the bond from subsisting.

In the right conditions and to the extent that knowledge and practical wisdom determine, a correspondence takes place for the good of all between what is spoken on high in eternity and what is spoken in each heart; and this gets fixed therein as a rule of life in case of fidelity; and it is reflected in action; and is poured out on others; and in each one and in others it becomes truth lived and manifested, and then happiness enjoyed and shared, leading back to God one day, through the paths of moral action, that which began with Him.

The character of a sacrament, then, that is of a sensible and effective sign in the order of grace, may well be attributed to the ritual word.

There will follow from this certain duties towards him who speaks, and towards those who hear.

If the Word is imperfect, so much the worse for him who lessens its value; but the hearer, instead of indulging in keen criticism, ought to repeat in a supernatural sense the saying of Leibnitz : " There is no book so bad that I cannot obtain something from it."

If it happens to be good, so much the better for him who has been first favoured by it; let not the hearer pour out such fulsome praise as would make of a worshipful thing a purely human verbal exercise.

There are found in the Church, by the blessing of God,

orators of the first rank, such as St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Bernardine, Bossuet, Bourdaloue and Lacordaire. These may be studied as masters when one is at college or at the University; but their hearers and their pious readers had and have to consider them as obedient to the heavenly voice, and not to do them wrong by an entirely profane admiration.

We may well recall how one day Lacordaire replied to the applause drawn from the emotion of his auditory: "Do not applaud the word of God," said he: "Love it, practise it, that is the only applause which ascends to God and is worthy of Him."

To sum up, the Christian preacher of the Word, the hearer of the Word are both in a current of truth and life from which both ought to profit, so as to recover the spirit of its institution and do sacramental work.

Good will and progress; these are the two terms of action.

To go to a sermon as to a baptism, in order to be purged from one's errors; as to a confirmation, to be fortified for the fight; as to confession, to repent of falling so far below the demands of Christian doctrine; as to the holy table, to receive the alms of truth as one receives the white morsel of the Host; that is the ideal.

Love, through which the faith that is preached becomes living and active, will be the fruit of this manifold sacrament, and we must remember the word of St. Paul: *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.*

But if I have charity, the Apostle might have added, then whether I am brazen cymbal, sounding trumpet or horn or heavenly flute, whether deep-voiced bassoon, martial fife or wailing violin, rustic hautboy or blaring trombone, checked only by the score, I shall be an instrument of God. And all together, in the temple where we succeed one another, diverse voices, humble or great, across the ages, we are the organ with a thousand notes, the superhuman orchestra for a concert where Christ beats time, the Holy Ghost supplies the theme and the inspiration, and the spiritual Temple, the Church, composed of living stones, thrills in its endeavour to urge all its sound-waves into her, in unison with the opening Word, *the Word, which upholds all spirits.*

CHAPTER IX

INDULGENCES

THIS is the place to append something that was first of all a scandal to Protestants, but which even some Catholics find a difficulty, as if it were a dark corner, a shabby little room in our mother's house.

Spiritual favours for the remission of all or part of the temporal penalty due to already pardoned sin are granted on certain conditions by the authority of the Church; these are called Indulgences.

Indulgence, etymologically, signifies liberation, setting free, condonation, and implicitly, kindness.

Among the pagans, an indulgence was a partial or total amnesty granted on certain days as an expression of public rejoicing.

The Jews, too, had days of pardon and indulgence, and "jubilee" years. Here is a natural tendency, manifestations of which are to be found everywhere, and there is no doubt that in this case the Church has borrowed her mode of action and speech from both the Jewish and pagan surroundings in which she was born and spent her wonderful infancy.

Her actual practice hardly became fixed until the thirteenth century; but the way in which it developed through the ages is the best commentary upon it.

The first Christians, baptised as adults, in full knowledge, and separated by their baptism from an environment more or less abandoned to vice and superstition, were invited to an altogether holy life. *You were aforetime darkness,* said St. Paul to them, *but now are you light in the Lord.*

Men being what they are, it sometimes happened that they fell away into great faults. The primitive fervour was then manifested by generous reparations. They thought it natural to submit to public confession, and then to public penance, which was called *canonical* penance, because it was regulated.

The sinner clothed himself in a black and coarse garment. If a woman, her hair was cut. On the first day of Lent ashes were put on the penitent's head in the midst of the assembly, whence our *Ash Wednesday.* The penance was longer or shorter according to the sin; forty days, three years, seven years, ten years, or for the whole life in cases of atrocious crimes. And during this time all outward rejoicing was forbidden, rigorous fasts were prescribed, the penitent could only assist at the religious offices at the door, or later on in

a special part of the holy place, with the penitents of his class; from certain parts of the mysteries he was always excluded.

In spite of these severities, or because of them, there was often room for mitigation. Reasons of health brought about the commutation of punishments, an extraordinary fervour their remission. The danger of death or the approach of a persecution caused the public sinners to be readmitted to communion with their brethren. Lastly, the intercession of persons of high merit, and in particular the recommendation of the martyrs, who for this purpose sent from their prisons what was called a *ticket of peace* (*libellus pacis*), gained more or less extensive remission, on the express condition of fitting dispositions on the part of the penitent.

Rightly considered, and especially if we interpret this early outward discipline by the doctrine initially implied or expounded everywhere, we clearly realise that indulgences form an integral part of Christianity in all its stages. The only difference is in the applications and contingencies, and we can only see in this development the adaptive suppleness of a religious organism full of life, and not a mass of fixed machinery.

Our faults have a twofold effect. They divide us from God, breaking or weakening the friendship between Him and us; such is the *fault* (*culpa*) of theologians, which implies deterioration of the soul (*macula peccati*).

On the other hand, by disturbing the moral environment, like a stone cast into the water, like every inordinate explosion of force, sin must produce a reaction called the *penalty,* whether it be direct, by means of an immediate retribution exacted by providence, or, if immanent justice fails—which is usual, since its mechanism is inadequate to the exigencies of the moral order—by means of interventions, terrestrial or superterrestrial, personal or divine.

Satisfaction, as it is called in the language of theology, is part of the reparation for our faults in the same way as confession, which is an avowal of them, and as contrition, which is regret for them, and as absolution, which, though it undoubtedly effaces them in themselves, yet lets the effects of disorder run on.

It is not sufficient to change our way, we must abolish the old path by which we went astray; because this path interferes with the plan of the mystic garden, and in following it we have trampled down the flowers of good.

Christ, the good gardener, comes to help us. His Cross is the spade with which we must perform the reparatory labour of sowing and planting. But we must work along with Him, for if Christ is our Christ, we are also, with Him, our own

Christs. He does not treat us as irresponsible beings, as Luther pretended, affirming that the penalty due to sin has been paid once for all, and that we are therefore, in spiritual things, simply heirs—of course with every opportunity of becoming destroyers.

We for our part say—and is not the Reformers' doctrine in greater need of reform than ours?—that the redemption of Christ restores our moral fortunes, causes us to be spiritually reborn, and puts us in a position to lead our destinies as we direct them; but that we are the actors in this drama, in union with the fraternal company to which we belong, with the Choregus who presides over us, with God, the author of the play which is being performed by mankind.

We have said, in regard to the sacrament of penance, that the sinner regains the friendship of God by a threefold power; God Himself, who absolves; the Church, the spiritual body united to God, who heals one of its members by replacing it with its own consent under the empire of the vital idea; the sinner himself, without whom nothing is done, any more than a member is healed if its own reactions will not assist the organic action and influence of the soul.

When we consider the punishment due to sin, the doctrine must be the same. It concerns the sinner, so far as he is solvent; it concerns the united group, to which he is attached by chains of solidarity; it concerns God, who is the Father of each and of all, whose readiness to condone exceeds even His love of justice.

The doctrine of indulgences finds its place in this combination, the three constituents of which it has to look after with care.

Our autonomy will be well cared for by the fitting dispositions being demanded of us, and these are, firstly, the state of grace, since there is question of a remittance of friendship, and this presupposes friendship to be reigning; secondly, the intention to free ourselves, at least in this mitigated form; thirdly a personal contribution, which will consist in some voluntary and useful work, determined by authority; prayer, alms, a pilgrimage, the use of a pious object, missionary service, works of mercy and so on, things which have already a redemptive value themselves, which will be increased by means of social contribution.

God's part will be admitted, since reservation is made for His wisdom and His benevolent acceptation.

Lastly our solidarity in God and in Christ is solemnly sanctioned when we profess that on certain conditions the superabundant satisfactions of some have a value for others; that their sum-total is a family treasure which can be disposed of indefinitely, since the merits of Christ are like the bottom of an infinite purse, and since our group is not an anarchy,

but a social organisation, authority has power to distribute spiritual goods on the conditions just now expressed.

All the theology of indulgences is thus summed up in a few words, and for my own part I only see in it a new manifestation of the essential nature of the Church.

We are a band united in God by Christ in the form of a society. This condition of Catholic life occurs everywhere.

If we are truly united, that is members of a single body, in Jesus, how could the pains and virtues of the Man-God, those of our Lady of the Seven Dolours, those of the many known or unknown heroes and martyrs of all times, who have heaped up spiritual treasures *which the rust doth not devour*—how could all this count for nothing in the case of brethren of goodwill, but lacking in other wealth?

The sacrifice of the Cross was the first of the indulgences gained for us, and to it all others are attached. By visiting Calvary as a pious and sympathetic pilgrim, by telling the beads of the Rosary of sorrow, by wearing the scapular of the Cross, by saying the prayer of the Five Wounds, and by giving the famished earth the alms of blood which must aid it to live, Christ has gained for us a plenary indulgence, and the imitators of Christ, by uniting themselves to it freely, have further increased the treasure, *making up,* as St. Paul says, *what was lacking of the sufferings of Christ,* namely, our active adhesion for the sake of our own and of the general good.

In family life a son will sometimes say : Father, if you love me, overlook what my brother has done; he is sorry, and if you will let me, I will pay the debt.

In our civil societies, are not amnesties granted in favour of good citizens, and are there not always burghers of Calais ready to die for the salvation of their people?

In the Church, the like ought to be found for a much stronger reason, since love is our first law of association, and love shares its good things.

Could it be that social exchanges are valuable only in the temporal sphere? Ought we not to show solidarity, ought we only to be brothers for the sake of living for temporal advantages, whereas a deeper brotherhood should carry us beyond time, just as far as religious feeling bears us, that is to say close to our divine source?

No one can avail for me, be for me what I am not, lift me higher than myself by substitution. Contrariwise, no one can keep me from having committed the evil which I have committed, prevent me from being depreciated by it spiritually, and before God there is no remedy but repentance. But after I have repented, to pay on my behalf by a friendly substitution accepted in a friendly spirit, all can do that, and the

society can do it all the better when authority sets it to work.[1]

Bear ye one another's burdens, wrote St. Paul.

All for each, each for all, that beautiful device of Positivism, which Positivism did not invent, which Switzerland has made its own, is simply Christian thought.

The merit of the holy souls ascends to the heaven of the Church like vapours that heap up their treasures in the sky. The rain falls upon us in virtue of physical laws; merits are poured upon us according to moral, and what is more, social laws, and this is why authority intervenes; but substantially it is the same thing. It is a question of accumulation and distribution in a domain where exchanges are a matter of right, because it is governed by brotherhood.[2]

Let us add that these exchanges, provided they are founded on the unity of men in God, in the Church of God, must have all the fulness of what we call in mystical language the *communion of saints;* that is to say that, crossing the barriers of this world, they must carry their lofty greetings even beyond the mysteries of the other world.

Are we to be narrower than Comte, who said : " Society is composed of the dead as much as and more than of the living "?

Love, stronger than death, when it is united to the Love that does not die, joins us to those who have disappeared in a society that is real, although mysterious. If they have not paid their debt, that debt which, though a debt of friendship, cannot be escaped, and which makes them prisoners of happiness, victims of hope deferred, martyrs who *superabound with joy in the midst of their tribulations,* but who are none the less martyrs, we can pay it for them, we can in any case offer to do so, anticipating the divine acceptance, united to the religious authority which offers it with us, though it cannot

[1] Let us say in more theological terms : Satisfaction as such can be transferred, not merit or culpability, not repentance or obduracy.

We say satisfaction *as such* because satisfaction is also a remedy, as Socrates insisted. Now, considered as a remedy, satisfaction is evidently a personal thing. It is not exclusively personal, regarded as discharge of a debt.

[2] Satisfactions can be communicated from one individual to another, as when the Saints promised their penitents to satisfy for them, imposing on them only a standard penance, a *Veni Creator* or a rosary. They can also be communicated among associations of persons who come together for this exchange, as in religious orders. But that is not an *indulgence,* because it is not truly socialised, for it does not pass through the law of the Society. Authority does not intervene in it, or it is not invested with *ordinary jurisdiction.* It is an infiltration from stone to stone in the whole building ; it is not the water-shoot provided for by the architect. Hence there is a reduction of influence, and even more, insecurity of effect, which does not occur when the whole body intervenes through its heads, when we are in the properly social sphere, paying *canonically* a " canonical debt," and when they act to whom it was said : *Whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

order it in a sphere in which it has no longer authority. This is what we call the *suffrages.*[1]

In his sublime poem, Dante, after having made his *Purgatory* resound with the eternal *Pater noster,* concludes: "If so many prayers are uttered there for our good, what ought not the hearts wherein goodwill is deep-rooted to do and say here for these souls?"

As for the method of measuring these favours, forty days, a hundred days, a year, seven years and seven quarantines, etc., that is a historic survival.

The measures of the world to come are inaccessible to us. The rotation of our planets and the periods which they mark in the duration in which our life appears have nothing to do with the mysterious states into which we enter on leaving this world. Yet we must speak of them, since we are in spiritual relations with the Beyond. We may well speak of duration in regard of God, because we, in relation with Him, conceive Him as in relation with us and with our days. We say He was yesterday, He is to-day, and He will be through all the ages. However, God has no duration.

Thus the events of the life beyond the world, in the spiritual sphere where those who survive us are, these happenings, without transcending all duration, like the life of God, yet transcend our life, and that is enough to prevent us from being able to speak of them except by using a permanent transposition, of which the first term is known to us, but not the second.

We do not know what, in that world, a hundred days of indulgence signifies. It certainly does not mean doing away with a hundred days of purgatory. What are a hundred days of purgatory? But so far as we are concerned I know it signifies a benevolence corresponding to that which the primitive Church displayed in remitting a hundred days of public penance. That is enough for me.

The spirit of the Church has not changed, nor has the value of her works. The help which she wishes to obtain for our efforts, when we offer to pay for ourselves or for others, she measures by standards within our and her own range; she judges according to this life. In the higher life, which we know is related to this life, without knowing in what the relationship consists, she leaves the commutation to God.

[1] It was only in the fourteenth century that indulgences were officially applied by the Church to the departed; but the principle consisted in the approved practice of offering good works, prayers and sacrifices for them. The approbation was an implicit participation by authority, which was sufficient. Particularly so as authority does not perform in their regard, as it does here, an act of authority. Indeed the other world is undoubtedly bound to this by charity, but is not subject to it. The application of suffrages is then left to the divine judgement, and not settled with authority by the Church.

Moreover, this manner of reckoning has the advantage of binding us to the past, and proving that if the Church has, by reason of new circumstances, materially relaxed her formidable demands, she has not renounced any principle, and is ready to restore the voluntary penalties called public penances when our own fervour and the times are ready for them.

And now I do not think that there can be any serious objection to the doctrine of indulgences.

Abuses there are and will be. We do not take up their defence. What is there which does not admit of abuses? The famous quarrel of the *lapsi* (the *fallen*) in the time of St. Cyprian proves that abuses in the matter of indulgences had been heard of before Luther. They existed in Luther's time, and he reformed them by perverting all religion, and even morals, since he found fault with free will. We are not reformers of that sort. And our support of indulgences will be no more troubled by the lowliness herein required—a lowliness which has much to do with some folks' repugnance—than by the abuses.

A scapular, a medal piously worn, a prayer recited, a visit to a church, a participation in a good work, all humble conditions, for the opening to us of a treasure-house of satisfactions for the payment of our souls' debts, these may make the rationalist shout, but before he shouts, we ought ourselves to cry out to him to hearken; we ought to beg him, on his honour, not to start by misrepresenting what he is going to criticise, not to speak of "prayer-machines" and "blank signatures" just where moral dispositions without which nothing is done are formally required; not to charge us with disproportion just where proportion is secured by means of that great thing which he himself cries up so loudly—solidarity. An insurance in which the interested party and the society participate ought not to astonish anybody in these days.

And in addition, we would beg the unbeliever not to talk about excrescences, because he himself gets nothing out of the spiritual order, if it be well established that the lure of indulgences, quite a mother's lure for such spiritual children as we are, arouses the fervent to interior and exterior efforts, as every honest man will testify, if he lays aside a blind pride.

Cardinal Wiseman, returning from Rome after the Jubilee of Leo XII., brought to his compatriots the moving testimony of his admiration for what he had experienced in the midst of the Roman crowds. He proclaimed in an eloquent address the eminently moral, charitable and joyous character of such a solemnity.

We must also say as much of our private jubilees, concen-

trated into quite humble practices. A rosary, each bead of which is charged with collective prayers, prayers which I gather when I add mine to them, in the secrecy of our union in God, is a moral treasure of which I will allow no one to speak ill.

My prayer is only a drop: when it is joined to others, thanks to an institution, when it is united to the tears of the Cross, when it goes, timid tributary that it is, to meet the flow of tears and blood and streaming sweat which have drained the earth, when it makes its way with them towards Thy sea, O God, where all meet together again, it gets the right to say: I, too, am of the ocean.

Even the innocent tricks at which some people scoff, when they see pious persons go out through one door and in through another in order to gain the Portiuncula indulgence a greater number of times—I confess that I should hardly think of being amused at them. I am touched by them, without being blind to what the indifferent may make out of them.

I know that stupidity and superstition can find more doors than the church possesses; but what humility and faith are squandered upon these tedious wanderings round and round!

I am much inclined to say to rationalists in Hamlet's words: There are more things in heaven and earth, more things, I would add, between heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Heaven is great, and for that reason bends down. The earth is small, and for that reason, when it becomes conscious of itself, it is crushed down with humility; but this is in order to grow. You who think yourselves great, and who are for that very reason less than all men, draw yourselves up as high as you will, you will not touch the stars! But even to the stars holy humility can ascend, because love with infinite wings picks it up, because it has as its helpful brother Him whom the stars adored on the night of Bethlehem, and recognises Him by having seen Him descend, and awaits His reascension, with His harvest of living stars, towards the immensities of the divine.

BOOK IV

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE IN REGARD TO THIS WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO THE RELIGIONS THAT PRECEDED HER

IF the essence of a being explains its characters, it explains also its reactions and its attitudes. The Church's attitude in regard to this world, in which she is called upon to live in order that she may be of service to it, will then afford us a new occasion of making a better judgement of her, and moreover of judging the world, so far as the soul of the Church controls it and concerns it.

The most immediate contact of the Church with the world that is adjacent to her must occur through what is most closely connected with her : namely, other religions. Let us see then what is the attitude which the Church took or takes up in regard to those religious systems which preceded her, which were contemporary with her or which are her daughters.

The truth of this matter—though few apologists and fewer opponents remember it—does not show all its terms in the same light at various epochs or in different circumstances. Nothing should be misunderstood; but to leave in the background is not to misunderstand, and there are many reasons why the Church, at different periods, or amid changing events, should take up very varying positions in regard to the religious associations that have been her predecessors, her contemporaries, or branches torn from her.

It is normal for a living thing to modify its adjustments. As there is an evolution of life, so is there also an evolution of the manners of life, because, since life must be *differentiated* and *defended,* must *progress,* it must take up one by one, either alternatively, or simultaneously in different respects, a position of *separation,* of *opposition,* or of *inclusion,* sympathetic or useful.

These three aspects of a single programme of life may be observed in the life of our Church. At her beginning, we see her concentrating and setting herself in opposition, haughtily declaring what she is not, laying down what she is, rectifying her frontiers with a care that astonishes the historian of to-day, when he forgets at what point a newborn organism needs to confine itself to the task of self-fabrication which absorbs it, and to ensure its future by a very clear-cut

differentiation which causes it to be what it is, and not a formless thing that is the involuntary result of pure chance; an abortion instead of the definite germ that makes the species.

We already obtain this impression on reading the Gospel. In spite of its immense scope, expressing the universal character of salvation, we find the *little flock,* as the Saviour calls it, entirely keeping to itself, entirely separate. It is *not of this world,* though meant to conquer the world. It seems to agree with nothing, though it has connections with everything. It breaks away, seeming to slight even the ties of blood, even the duties of birth. Father, mother, brothers, or fellow-countrymen only continue to be so if they can be fitted in with the spiritual work, anxiety for which is absorbing even to the point of abolishing everything, until everything once more recovers its rights, becoming bound to that One Thing Necessary whose exclusive pre-eminence shows itself eminently comprehensive in use.

A fortiori does the Gospel free itself from out of date or false religions.

After the death of the Master and at the start of His organisation, the Church only accentuates this separation, for this reason, that the Gospel, in *putting itself forward,* had at least to proclaim its universal signification with all clearness, while the Gospel at the beginning of its task had above all to live, and not to philosophise.

The religions to which the Church succeeded presented themselves, then, at the start, as the country which had to be left behind, as the matter from which it was necessary to be freed, as the *other one,* or the opposing factor : for the *other one,* when differentiation is in question, is really an adversary. So the Apostles and our fathers the first Christians show themselves as severe as possible to the pagan religions. *You were aforetime darkness,* says St. Paul to the Ephesians, *but now are you light in Christ.* Light and darkness; nothing can better mark the opposition between the religious state of the world apart from Christ and the state that Christ inaugurated.

We are not speaking at the moment of the lights which might have shone through the night, of the stars or mysterious moons which pierced the clouds or sparkled while waiting for the morning. The moment for these distinctions has not yet come. There is darkness; here is light. Here is the Church; there is what is not the Church. Formerly the search was vain, there was ignorance of the true bonds between man and God, wandering and corruption in all the walks of life that border on religion. Afterwards, the true religious life, truth, holiness, and the lure of progress.

Nothing can be clearer. Those who like clearly defined situations may be fully satisfied. There is no compromise.

He who is not with Me is against Me is the formula, given by Christ Himself, of the differentiation which has to be assured for the Church to establish her specific reality, ready for a characterised work, in place of postponements and muddles.

Even more, Judaism, which is not night, but the dawn, since it is the road to the day, is treated as a relative night. From that the Church is specially separated. She separates after a crisis which, small as it may appear, is the most formidable and most decisive of Christian history.

The Church would doubtless be more careful to mark the real rôle of Israel in the preparation for Christianity than the useful, although indirect, part of the other old religions; but this difference of treatment in its favour is entirely relative. In St. Paul, the *Law, Grace,* are in permanent opposition, and for a long period this opposition did nothing but increase.

So the dawn, if it rejects the light, is as much against the light as is the darkness itself. Since by definition it is transitory, it abuses its purpose if it tarries, it turns back towards what went before it, it becomes darkness, and may rightfully be treated as darkness.

When a thick fog prevents the sun's rays from reaching the earth, do we not say that it is dark? And we like such darkness as this less than the other kind.

That is why the hardened Judaisers, the first heretics, separated by anticipation, if we may say so, in that they refused to join themselves to the body, are considered by the Fathers as men of darkness, as pagans worse almost than the pagans themselves, because they offer less ground for hope, since darkness at least tends towards the light, whereas the darkened dawn, thinking that it possesses light enough already, runs the risk of despising it altogether.

This point of view was truth itself. The divinity of the Old Testament, far from being denied or neglected, was included in it; but the emphasis was laid on the differences, because, from the other side, their opponents belonging to the Synagogue did so too.

And as the Church, in her beginnings, was differentiated from and opposed to Judaism, as of necessity; so does she oppose in combat, or as an offensive army, the enemies of her life. All life is a struggle, because all life is surrounded by enemies who wish to take from it what enables it to be itself. But at the beginning of its evolution a life is forced to fight much more strenuously. Everything can be hostile to it, because it is weak. On the other hand, as it disturbs the environment in which it comes to light, it provokes reactions against which it must itself react.

When we first strike a light, we shelter it with our hand, because the least puff will blow it out. When we plant a young shoot, we protect it with prickles. Nature, in order to

protect any higher life against surroundings that threaten its fragility, keeps it long in the womb of its mother, whose love defends it from without, while itself, by its own reactions, defends itself inwardly against a crowd of harmful influences. When birth has supervened, defence, still as always necessary, takes the special form of that egoism found in children, which normally is just a manifestation of the will to live.

For the newborn Church, the moral struggle, the only struggle suited to her, the only one also which was possible for her, was also a necessity. She conducted it energetically, judging what judged her, condemning what condemned her, declaring Satanic and treating as such those religious manifestations which yet were not all Satanic; but which were so far as they were not only misleading about the good, but still more so about a host of things, and crowned all this by opposing the birth and growth of the Church in the ways we all know.

The struggle went on therefore with a bitterness which in other circumstances might have seemed to have forgotten all measure. When it is a question of living what Nietzsche calls a life of danger, there is no time for philosophising about *pros* and *cons*. In such a case we fight; necessity, and therefore virtue, too, demand it.

Later on, when doctrine was safe, and Christian social life had taken on a vigour that was able to ensure its future, things were not the same. There were still crises which gave rise to some of the same needs; there were mixed situations which demanded modified postures, which is why we said just now that the three actions of the living being in relation to its environment, *differentiation, opposition, inclusion,* are in part successive, in so far as they mark various stages in its evolution; in part alternative, in order to answer to accidental circumstances; in part simultaneous in various respects, so as to adapt themselves to varying complexities.

In any case, in the natural order of things, the horizon must become clearer. One can turn back to the condemned past, to those branded religions, those institutions and doctrines which had been called wicked, and, gathering up all the true wheat still standing amidst the hosts of tares, rising with greater freedom of mind towards the providential designs manifested through the whole of history, one can satisfy all the aspects of the eternal problem, and put together the elements of a complete religious philosophy.

The Fathers of the fourth century gave themselves up to this work, the theology of the Middle Ages continued it; our own times have enriched it with their great effort of criticism. The result of this elaboration might be summed up thus :

The true and universal religion is Judeo-Christianity. It goes back through God and through the Christ He promised

to the beginning of history. The germ of its social form is found in the Synagogue. It expands in its integrity into the Apostolic and Roman Church.

Outside this there is *per se* only deviation, in the case of the religions of pagan antiquity, as we say that there is resistance in the case of the religions that border on Christianity, and infidelity in the case of heresies and Christian schisms.

But when we say *per se,* we leave room for chance, and chance holds a place in life that cannot easily be measured.

In an immense degree the old pagan religions were corruptions of religious life; but in part they were also preparations for, and in certain respects anticipations of, the Gospel.

Truth, practical morals, worship—they had something of all these, an abundance of bad, but some good too, and therefore Tertullian calls the soul *naturally Christian.*

The search of so many centuries in the *endeavour to reach after God,* as St. Paul said in the Areopagus, cannot have been entirely in vain. There were religious geniuses; there were pious men; there were saints after a fashion, at least men who by reason of an interior grace whose paths are mysterious wished to serve the good with all their heart, as a Christian can do with greater resources, but not necessarily with more zeal. Their dogmatic, moral and ritual endeavours, if we may use these epithets in a sense so debased, set up values some of which were precious. To these we might apply the words which the Saviour used of the Jewish law : *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil,* that is partly to confirm it, and also to purify it and carry it farther.

Here then there had to be preparation. All the work of general civilisation, which took the religious form in antiquity, had to take part in it, and this became for Christ's work as it were the soil wherein the divine seed would grow into a tree.

Many authors describe this evolution, while others undertake to note the differences. These two kinds of work complete, and do not contradict each other. The soil is not the plant, and to whoever confounds them we have to say that the plant is a living thing, the soil is but putrefaction. But it is a fruitful putrefaction. The most instructive studies are those which unite the two points of view; such is one of the most recent, which shows at what point pagan *syncretism* was unable to produce Christianity by itself, even less to take its place, and yet at what point it served it.[1]

As for saying in what sense the Church can see *anticipations* of herself in the ancient religions, the idea of her

[1] Bernard Allo, O.P., *L'Évangile en face du syncrétisme païen.* Paris : Bloud et Gay.

Catholicity through time allows of this without difficulty. We have seen in our Church the universal society of souls, from the fact that they are united in God through Christ. We have said of Christ that He is of all times; that His historical life is only the centre of His influence; that if He, the Saviour of all, tarried, it was for providential and beneficial reasons, not because He was given to us and refused to others. Now this delay, determined by the work He was to perform, does not prevent, but requires that the very expectation of Christ should form part of His work, should contribute to integrate His kingdom and should justify historically what Paul said: *Christ was yesterday, to-day and for ever.*

But this phrase, *the expectation of Christ,* must not be understood too narrowly. The expectation of Christ is firstly and directly the Jewish faith in a future Messias; but it is also, secondarily and not so directly, the whole of past facts, inasmuch as they are ruled by God with an eye to His final work. Before the animal kingdom could expect man, or apart from this expectation, there was expectation of life, culminating in man, and the expectation of all nature, the end of which was to serve and to anticipate our future humanity, God's *image,* as far as it could do so by offering *traces* of God.

It is the same with the religious life. At bottom all is religious, that is, in the creative intention, since *all is for the elect.* And all that is religious is Christian and Catholic in the same sense, for the same reason.

When we speak of a *soul of the Church,* including in it the elect of all times, we mean that the eternal God has always united to Himself, through the sempiternal Christ, the souls who are called and confirmed in good by His grace. We see in it those *dispersed children of God* of whom St. John speaks, and whom Christ, in His historic mission, came to *gather together into one.*

St. Augustine saw in Job the Edomite "a citizen of the spiritual Jerusalem." This is an interesting and enlightening case. It shows how grace seeks upright souls in all quarters in order to unite them to their common Principle by the solidarity which unites us across the ages through Christ. But Job is not an isolated case; he has his religion, as he has his family, his country, a whole environment in which his interior life finds hindrances no doubt, but helps too. Can we say that in his case these helps are not willed by God, and providentially prepared for interior grace to show and to maintain itself, to be preserved and grow, even as it was able to come into existence, if not through their efficacy yet perchance with their assistance? God makes use of all things, even of evil; and much more of what is defective or uncovenanted.

We may generalise this symbolic case, and say that in the

ancient world there were, beside the Synagogue, the authentic organisation of salvation for those times, other religious organisations which, though in themselves foreign to the scheme of salvation, and therefore always in themselves antagonistic, were yet in certain respects providential means of assistance for elect souls. To the extent that these organisations favoured, not vices and errors, as they often did, but virtues and real religious feeling, as they also did to a greater or less extent, they were helps to salvation in the name of God and of Christ; they afforded protection which was nevertheless salutary; they were as it were occasional uncovenanted stays of the universal soul of the Church.

In this connection we see the Saviour's teaching adopt apparently different positions. *He that is not with Me is against Me,* He said. *He that is not against you is with you,* He said to His disciples in another sense. These two truths are complementary. They express two moments, two aspects of the whole truth.

Jews or Gentiles, considered as persons or as groups; in so far as they had aught that was useful or indispensable to the realisation of the designs of Providence that through all time were Christian; in so far as they formed part, each in his own rank and degree, of the religious plan of the world; to us all are oldtime friends, fathers, brethren, children of the Church eternal, even though in other respects they might have been causes of her prevention or ruin.

We must be on our guard against unqualified judgements. Life sometimes demands summary executions, for the reasons we have stated; but when we are not thinking of *moments,* but have to present a general view, we ought to remember that religious justice is the highest kind of all.

Our Church agrees with this. In her wide Catholicity as her doctors understand it, the past and the present become united; the future has its roots in the remotest threads of religious life, in the dark soil of human nature, taking the Cross as its trunk, whereon, as on a tree with measureless branches, all the souls of men, like birds, are henceforward invited to rest.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS

THE feelings of the Church with regard to the religious past of the world cannot fail to apply to the present in due degree. Past, present, future are differences of time which entail partial consequences; but their unity involves consequences also; the one can no more be sacrificed than the other.

Since the office of the past is to pour itself out through the present into the future, the past which offers resistance to progress, though it be antecedently good, becomes bad from the fact of its resistance; what was bad becomes worse. The ancient religions which have survived the coming of Christianity into the world, therefore, have aggravated the badness of whatever in them was bad; and what was good in them, what has caused us to call them anticipations of and preparations for Christianity, has to-day become an impediment to it.

The duty of the old religions was to correct themselves in so far as they were deviations; in so far as they were preparations, to arrive at what they prepared, and at last to abdicate, since when the *perfect* had come, the provisional, and much more the accessory, an accessory of so mixed a character, had nothing to do but disappear in the perfect. *The light of the world* ought to dispel the darkness and with its own cloudless light drive away the twilight, and those flashes few and far between which give charm to the early morning, but disgrace the lingering noonday.

The sacrifice was not accepted, nor is it yet. For very complex historic reasons; questions of race, of aversion, of age-long habit, of inveterate ignorance or of pride that excluded all that came from others, of unconquered passions or of misdirected goodwill, the dissident religions have been perpetuated as dissident civilisations are perpetuated.

It is striking to notice how far these two cases throw light on each other. How few have gained by the great progress of the latter ages, a progress contemporary with Christianity and plainly covering the same countries on the map! How tiny is the little spot of healing oil, which we call civilisation, spreading over the world from Christian lands!

One can understand this, but not approve of it. Relativist or dilettante thinkers who here see nothing but interesting variants have always been subjected to the Church's condemnation. Variety is precious when it expresses nature more richly by developing various aspects of it; but the variety that consists in producing cripples and abortions

instead of normal human beings has nothing to commend it to the lover of mankind. Jacques Callot chuckles over it, and Velasquez, with his amazing serenity, treats it with cold pessimism; but the practical man and not the painter, the man who would control life will cut down *Antonio el Ingles* and the *Infant de Vallecas* to an average height.

We have to heal what is abnormal or pathological. If it is wilfully so we must condemn it. If it is approved by some, as is the tendency to dilettantism or indifferentism in religion, it is our duty to denounce their error, which is the result of cowardice.

Our Church does not shrink from doing this. To-day as at the time of her birth, with regard to the religions which she found in possession, and which persecuted her, or to the religions which obstinately lived on beside her, isolated or aggressive—partial truths mixed with gross errors, infamous practices or pernicious tendencies, whereas she for her part is, through Christ and through God which He imparts to her, the whole truth in all its elements if not in its development, fruitful practice and active holiness in the individual and social order—always and everywhere, we repeat, the Church never forgets to exercise that sublime inflexibility which truth owes to error, of good to evil, and the better whose hour has come to the opposition of what is imperfect.

Do not fear—or do not hope, according to your point of view—that the Church will ever take up the attitude of granting dogmatic toleration to religious systems as they are, by paying compliments to the truth that there may be in them and making concessions to their errors. That is not like the Church.

Our Church says the thing that is. She claims her rights. Since she is charged with the guidance of humanity, because she continues the Son of Man through time, she offers to all her rôle of mediator. She does not force herself on men; but she adjudicates upon their refusal of her and classifies them in accordance with its nature. She can allow no one to say Salvation is here or there, unless this be where she is.

"O false Messiahs," she cries, "behold the true Messias! It is I who am the candle-bearer—nay, the very wax of the living candle that calls Himself *the Light of the World.*

"I am the building *not made with hands* in which is the *door of the sheep,* the door through which all the sheep of humanity's flock must pass in order to reach the divine pastures.

"I am *the Way, the Truth and the Life,* since He is this whom I continue; since God is this, whom I bear in myself.

"Outside my Truth there are truths, but none that can stand alone. Outside my law there are laws; but none that have full autonomy. Outside my designs there are destinies that

allure : but there are none that reach fulfilment, no directions that can bring men final success."

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH NO SALVATION : that is the thing our Church says at the very outset.

But she herself acknowledges that this is only a partial truth. It must be completed.

As we have said : The newborn Church opposed the old religious systems, and yet they helped her; so we must also say : The living and permanent Church opposes the religious systems that dissent from her, and yet, in the name of God and His Christ, her wide embrace enfolds them and makes use of them. What was good at the beginning is good also on the journey. The being answers to the becoming.

As, then, our Church contains the whole of civilisation in her universality which has totality through Christ and God; so she contains also nature, which is the *Kingdom of God*; which is *put in submission to the elect,* as are *the elect to Christ,* and *Christ to God;* so the Church includes the dissentient religious systems in all they contain of good and useful, and absorbs them into her own unity.

The subordination in so far as general civilisation is concerned consists in this, that since human life is a unity, and religion proposes to cause man to attain to his real and final destiny, all that works for man works also for religion. The Church can say with more right than the poet of old : *I am man* (since she is a human-divine society) *and nothing that is human is strange to me.* That which it offers us, grace, rests on what Providence furnishes to us, Nature, and what we add by our own effort, civilisation. The whole effort of civilisation, then, like the work of nature, is surrounded by the religious movement which urges us towards the end of humanity.

If the Church takes a view wide enough to recognise the true and good elements of the religions that preceded her, she cannot deny it in those which she meets in the course of her existence, and which are for the most part the historic continuation of the former.

But in the true and the good elements of the dissident religions the Church recognises not alone the true and the good; she recognises *herself,* since she recognises man and God, whose synthesis she is, whose combined work is her own.

The good that there is in the dissentient religions does not belong to them; it belongs to humanity, whose instincts have suggested it; to God, who at all times and in all places has permitted rays of His light to filter through; and therefore to the true religion, which brings forward in the name of God and through the mediation of Christ the true and complete

formula of mankind, the true and perfect law of man, the good and efficacious means of man.

The *Catholic* Church, as she includes in her soul all the souls that are children of God, wherever they may be, so does her body include as extrinsically depending on her body all the religious forms that in themselves are antagonistic to her, but are her helpers in part and in the ways just mentioned.

Diabolic, as we said, are these non-Catholic religions; but they are none the less providential, though secondarily and as it were accidentally. They do not give grace; but they may occasion it, guard it or aid it to grow, by means of outward helps which God, the guest of every heart which does not refuse Him, renders efficacious. Chance refuges they might be called to-day as before Christ, just as we have called the Synagogue a real provisional refuge.

For the Chinese of noble heart, an unconscious Christian, his Confucius is better than nothing, his pagoda than the street, his rites than the unsustained inspiration of his inner life, his societies indifferently organised than a withering individualism. Better the Mahometan's Allah, the Hindu's Indra or Fire-god, even the Roman's "sacred chickens," than the mocker's sceptic smile.

And every religion, every Church, whatever it be, claims this praise while incurring the same reproaches. They resist and yet help. They refuse their allegiance, and yet in spite of all they promote allegiance to the *unknown God* who works in them, to whom they sometimes give themselves without knowing it, the Christ, the Brother of all men, even of those who know Him not, who stands at their closed door and takes as *Yes* the absence of a guilty *No* accompanied by a *Yes* to duty.

Though Christ be unrecognised, though outwardly He be outraged, He is present all the same. He dwells in the desert and He blesses the city. No denials discourage Him if they be blameless. Even persecutions do not compel Him to flee from the persecutor's soul. He gives His Blood to those who shed the blood of His noble sons without knowing that it is His. He gives life to those who slay Him. He gathers to Himself by mysterious ways those who blaspheme Him only with their lips. He promises His eternal life to the man that denies Him, provided it be not from his heart. *He beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,* because He is *Charity*. He says : FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO SEPARATED RELIGIOUS BODIES

IT remains to consider the case of the religions which were once part of our own, but have become detached from it and now form those rents in the seamless garment of Christ which we call heresies or schisms.

And to these, since their case is the same, we may add that total heresy which we call unbelief; that schism, gravest of all schisms, which consists in refusing every religious confession, in cutting the bonds that attach it to Christianity, to throw itself back into purely temporal associations, without sacramental life, without Christ, and in most cases without God. What attitude can the Catholic Church take—what attitude does it take, towards these separated religions and this non-religious separatism?

Clearly, since she claims to be the true Church, she only shows her confidence in that claim when she calls heresies and schisms *infidelities,* even as she called the old religions *deviations* and their continuation up to our own times *oppositions.*

When we look at these things in themselves, we must judge with the Church that heresy or schism are not only misfortunes, but great associated crimes.

To break that unity which is the foundation of religion, since all human beings have only one God to whom they may unite themselves, one Christ, one universal Man to give them to God, one authentic tradition connecting them with their Christ and one social functioning which communicates the good things which come to us from the Source through the human-divine channel; to refuse this organisation, and to say: No! it is in another fashion that we are going to fix our religious destinies; we will have God for ourselves, without being united to our brethren, also God's sons; we will have Christ for ourselves, at the risk of diminishing Him, changing His doctrine because we have not been willing to receive it from its authorised tradition, restraining His action by narrowing the social life it inspires, amputating ceremonial worship, even decapitating it, as Protestantism has done by refusing the Eucharist which we have seen to be the centre of everything, the pivot of the sacramental life and thereby of religion itself, wherein sacramentalism plays a fundamental part; to speak and act thus is to commit religious homicide, since it is to dislocate and as it were quarter man from the religious point of view.

And if we consider it, it is also to commit deicide, since by

pulling to pieces the human-divine organism the God who is given is killed no less than the man who lives by Him. He is discarnated, if one may so say, separated from a part of the universal flesh to which He was united and which He saved; the vessels are severed which allow the blood of the Cross to flow in the veins of humankind united in one body; the nerve-current is interrupted which is communicated by this divine brain and directed to all parts by means of an hierarchy of functions which henceforth is broken.

That they mutilate Christ, renew His Passion, cast lots for the seamless robe, divine in outrageous fashion what ought to remain invariably one, in order that Christ may live therein, in order that His life at once human and divine may procure for ours the same unity of riches; this is the continual accusation which our Church makes against the groups separated from her, and so separated from the centre of life established by Christ.

When these groups attempt to justify themselves by pleading such and such a historical juncture, a nationality to be preserved, opinions to be saved, special sentiments to be satisfied, she replies to them: Catholicism is wide enough to be open to all races, all nationalities, all legitimate opinions, all methods of thought which are not opposed to the collective sentiment of Christians, and this without asking of them any sacrifice of themselves, but on the contrary reinforcing them, as unity always reinforces those multiplicities of which it allows, as the pivot of a watch is the cause of the freedom of the movement poised well on its inexhaustible stability, as in a temporal society legitimate authority is the cause of the noble liberty of the citizen.

To set a nationality, a belief, a feeling, an aspiration in opposition to the unitive religion is to set life in opposition to life. Even more, in the case of erroneous opinions and unjustifiable feelings, it may be to set up in opposition to the true life a factitious and fallacious life which might more fitly be called death.

What has the Greek Schism gained by raising its head against the *filioque?* or rather—for the dogmatic quarrels counted for little—by shutting itself up in a spirit of terror which cut off the connection of its followers with humanity united in God; which has made them lingerers in the march of Christianity, as it has in certain respects in that of civilisation; which has crowned with the tiara, to their great pride in the first place, but later on in spite of them, warriors who were nothing but warriors, administrators who would have been more at home in organising a police than in holding a council, and who to-day are greatly embarrassed by their power.

Poor Czar! who in the days of his power had to cut the

knots of doctrinal or sacramental questions, and say: *Such is my unchangeable will,* in matters of which he was profoundly ignorant, and for which, as he well knew, he had no commission.

The Bulgarian exarchists, the Serbs, the Rumanians and the Greeks are in the same case. In disputing about questions of race and politics that have nothing to do with religious life they spend time and moral strength which ought to be given to our unity in God; which would have therefore to be subordinated to the central action represented by the Apostolic see, the visible place in which Christ, now invisible, reveals Himself as acting; as of old and always, though far off, Christ was and remains the living Place in which the Godhead reveals Itself and communicates Itself to the human race.

As for Protestantism, I do not ask what that has gained; I fear to be thought ironical. Not that it has lost more than the Easterns; but it knew better what it was doing, and so reveals a superiority which has turned out a misfortune.

It started from the criticism of abuses. And instead of helping to correct them, it committed itself the supreme abuse, the abuse of the branch discontented with its tree and which, instead of living mightily to resist the contagion and to regenerate the old sap, detached itself in anger and became a dead branch, useless to the tree and powerless to do without it.

The principle of free examination, which it admitted at the start in order to free itself from the unity which it repudiated as embarrassing, has borne its fruits little by little. It has broken up the primitive society, reducing it to numberless bodies each of which follows its own path. Even more, one might say that in spite of these chance and highly arbitrary associations, there have been and there are to-day as many sorts of Protestantism as there are thinking Protestants.

It was bound to be thus. And it was also bound to come to pass that in a matter in which the individual mind has so much need of the collective mind and of the divine guarantee which it procures, the letting loose of individualism should end in nothingness. Is not Protestantism running into nothingness to-day? Will it not be wrecked thereon to-morrow? I speak of the liberal Protestantism that is losing faith in Christ as Redeemer, and in the case of some is taking refuge in that vulgar belief in God as a name for the Ideal, that is in the true, the beautful and the good, a slight thing from the religious point of view, *the perfume of the broken vase,* exposed to all the winds that now blow over pure abstractions.

By this descending road, which it has pursued from stage

to stage, followed in vain by appeals, prophetic in the first place, and later simply clear-sighted, from the voice of Catholicism, Protestantism has come to be confounded in a mass of its members with that lay and laicising group of which we can no longer ask what it has gained, since it has lost everything; since from a religious point of view it is reduced to nothing, having realised absolute heresy and complete schism; thinking that it can be satisfied with the earthly life, when nothing is satisfying; banishing Christ, wishing to be its own Christ, saviour of itself and of those of whom it has charge, when the real Christ said *Without Me you can do nothing;* refusing to pray with its brethren, when invocation is the resource of every man who feels himself really wretched, suffering, tempted, mortal; with appetites for living, and for living well, and for living always, which remain invincible, in spite of all denials.

Our Church looks at all this with sadness and severity.

Putting aside for the moment every consideration of persons, she says of these things, schisms, heresies, unbelief, that they are horrible; that they cannot be deplored and condemned enough; that they must be combated with all the power of the truths they slight, of the goods that they wish to destroy, and of the humanity that ought to live by these truths and these goods.

It is the duty of Catholicism to struggle, to fight to the death against all these lessenings of God as given to men. Catholicism does not fail to do it. They may be astonished at this to whom truth is nothing, the religious good of mankind nothing, Christ and God Himself nothing. We are not on their side and we cannot flatter their principles.

But if we consider the subject from another side, and instead of looking at things *in themselves* look at souls, at the sincere thoughts which heresies have led astray, the good intentions drawn into schism without any responsibility on their part, the upright hearts, which are legion, I hope, even among those who call themselves unbelievers; unbelievers by chance, not by will, in the midst of a society which has lost its bearings; then we can no longer speak in the same fashion; we cannot maintain our attitude of severity, we should be in danger of offending consciences. Here brotherhood becomes the rule.

The Church knows this; she consents to it, and, without insisting on it indiscreetly, charged as she is with the official and the social aspects of the faith, and fearing pernicious equivocations, she none the less allows her doctors, when they touch on the personal aspect of affairs, to speak of her charity to all, to deal justice to all; and she recognises surely, with regard to the bodies separated from her embrace as with

regard to the non-Christian religions and the non-religious groups, whatever good they have, not only human, but even religious good, in the sense explained above.

It remains to give satisfaction, in our feelings and our conduct, to these two aspects of truth; condemnation and praise, in appearance contradictory, in reality complementary.

We must blame the dissent and appreciate what is good or even excellent in those who have dissented from us. We must hate the separatist spirit, and yet love and succour our separated brethren.

We must say and maintain, in the name of dogmatic truth, *Outside the Church no salvation.* But we must clearly understand that if by this word *Church* we mean the visible group that we enrolled Catholics form, the formula *Outside the Church no salvation* is no more than an official truth, which life outruns in every direction, and by which the Spirit, *which bloweth where it willeth,* will not agree to be bound.

And on the other hand, if by the Church we mean the universal society of souls united to God through Christ under the influence of grace, then *Outside the Church no salvation* signifies merely Outside God, no salvation; outside solidarity with Christ the Saviour and Mediator, no salvation; outside that good will which unites to God as Father and Christ as Brother every man who does not refuse grace with a positive and pertinacious refusal, no salvation. In a word: Outside the good, no salvation, and that is a thing obvious in itself.[1]

From this point of view, which is the only one that counts in the long run, there are no dissidents other than men of evil will or unconquered passion, enchained by these things to voluntary and blameworthy error. There are no heretics and schismatics, there are no unbelievers in reality other than those whom Père Gratry calls "heretics against humankind," that is the wicked.

Thus, by another road, we come back to the truth we ascertained at first, merely taken in a more subtle sense, but also one that is more and more inward and religious; namely, that the Church, at bottom, coincides with humanity itself,

[1] Pius IX., in the celebrated allocution of December 9, 1854, fixed on this point of doctrine: "The faith," he said, "compels us to believe that no one can be saved outside the Apostolic and Roman Church, which is the single ark of salvation, outside which all who do not enter will perish. Yet it is equally necessary to hold as certain that those who not through their own fault are ignorant of the true religion cannot bear in the Saviour's sight the responsibility for their situation. Now, who will have the presumption to fix the limits of this ignorance, in accordance with the nature and variety of peoples, countries, minds, and so many other and varying circumstances? When we are delivered from the fetters of the body, and see God as He is, we shall understand in what close and magnificent union the divine mercy and justice are bound. . . . But the gifts of heavenly grace will never fail those who with a sincere heart wish and ask to be regenerated by this light."

if by humanity we mean, in the moral sense, the society of those who are governed by the law of mankind. From the Church, indeed, in its interior reality, only the wicked are excluded, and the wicked, as such, are they not excluded from humanity as well?

O Church of souls, greater, I would fain hope, than the little flock enrolled in what we call the Church; more abundant than the tiny heap of sand gathered together with difficulty by the Apostles on the Mediterranean shores, while the immensity of the far-off beaches escapes us; richer in grace than we might believe from the smallness of the space watered by the sacramental stream; it is thou who canst save the men of all peoples and of all the sects outside the narrower Church, as thou hast been able to save the men of all the ages.

The grace of God is not tied to the sacraments, say the theologians; and so it is not tied to thee, visible Church, collective Sacrament; but only to thee, O mystic Church, inward Church, soul of the Church, which formest our union, implicit or explicit, with the Saviour, through Him to God and through God to all that is God; truth and eternity of happiness.

These wide thoughts cannot detach us from the visible and sanctifying body of our Church, since it remains well understood that for the man who knows it or can know it, for him who is born and is able to persevere in its communion, it is this Church and it alone which represents salvation.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO RELIGIOUS AND LAY MORALS

HAVING once settled the question of religions, we shall not find that of morals offer many difficulties; for it is in part identical.

All religions have imposed a system of morals, as they have inspired a dogma, as they have suggested a form of worship, seeing that morals are nothing more than an application of our respective beliefs to the end of life, beliefs which all religions intend to formulate with more or less success.

We must then expect the Church to speak of morals, in so far as morals are only corollary of religious systems, in the same way as she has spoken of the religions themselves.

Pagan morals were depraved in a number of important particulars. A system of individual morals which authorised suicide, drunkenness, debauchery, even worse (read only Plato's *Symposium,* if the *Epistle to the Romans* is not a sufficient authority); a system of family morals which sanctioned the oppression of woman, and debased marriage in its most fundamental laws; a system of social morals which proclaimed the interest of the State superior to everything, even to conscience; which admitted absolute slavery, that is to say the subordination of one destiny to another destiny, in regard to which the slave, though a *person,* was no more than a thing; such, to cite only these examples, are the deviations with which the Church can reproach the moral doctrines anterior to her.

Jewish morals, incomparably superior to pagan morals in that, firstly, they excluded the greatest excesses of wickedness; and secondly, in that they laid the foundations of the good, seemed to the Church, like Jewish dogma or ritual, a first beginning of her own practice. *I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,* said the Saviour; to carry it to a higher perfection.

Perfection, the complete basis for a definite starting forth of humanity, was lacking in Judaism. Judaism was a correct path; it was to lead to the high road and after that to make room for it. So the divine Legislator said: Moses ordained that for you; but I say *this,* thus indicating the fulfilment that He meant to obtain for the Jewish law.

The morals of the post-Christian period, in so far as they are bound up with the still-persisting religions of antiquity, must suffer the same condemnation. Some are horrible; as our missionaries and colonists know all too well. Others

offered higher or lower values; all are lagging behind, because they have resisted the progress of the Gospel, refused the fulness of the times, so that for them Christ has not yet come with His law of direction and emancipation for mankind.

As for the moral systems of heretics and schismatics, to judge them equitably we must see how far they are inspired by the true Gospel truly interpreted; how far they are biassed, contradicting the letter or not knowing how to develop the spirit. The Church makes these distinctions, and does not confound the Manichæans or the Cathari with Tolstoi or Gladstone. Yet she always marks a moral relapse by the sole fact that she testifies to a dogmatic relapse in all the dissenting bodies. It would be very easy to demonstrate this in the case of the Greek schisms, and not less so for the Lutherans, who have altered the notion of marriage for the worse, failed to recognise the rights of the woman and child, etc. If we do not dwell further on this, it is because it is not for us the essential thing.

The most serious case is not that of the dissenting sects and the moral systems they incorporate; but that of the abolition of religion, of unbelief and the moral system that it proposes to construct.

To construct is its claim! As if its precepts, whatever is sufficient or acceptable in them, were not simply a reflection of Christian surroundings, a perfume of the Gospel after the vase of the Gospel has been broken and cast aside!

There was a time when such derivation was recognised. They used to teach that *doctrine dies out,* but morals remain. The moral system of Christianity appeared to be the intangible part of its work, of which all else was the transitory vehicle. Man tore aside the veils and entered into the sanctuary.

We are very far from such a state of mind to-day. They talk to us about *the demands of the modern conscience* in a tone and with comments that leave us under no illusion. We are stragglers in morals as in all else. To-day man is reduced to Guyau, to Nietzsche, to the sociological school; to whatever he likes; he looks about him. The charm of the Gospel is broken, and the Wandering Jew, despising the loud call of the Cross, starts on his interminable journey once more.

The Church's attitude to this posture is soon defined. Three things strike her, in this moral apostasy which our age has witnessed.

Firstly, the pretence of freeing morals from all connection with revealed religion seems to her an immense practical mistake. If man is not left to himself to establish his life;

if there is a word of God in the world; if revelation is a fact, then to establish a system of morals, even as a science, without taking account of this fact would be like attempting to establish an astronomical system to-day without taking into account the earth's rotation.

And even more, if it is not only a word, but a life in common, that God sets before us; *Behold, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the world. If any man love Me, My Father also will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him:* can it be thought that human morality can evade this sublime intention of God, and proclaim itself as correct without being loving, without filially adoring That which dwells in our temples and our hearts?

True morals must start from man's true destiny, which is supernatural; must regulate all his relations, including, and particularly, his relations with God. So that if, from the point of view that we remarked just now, morals are a part of religion, its practical part; from another point of view, religion, with all that it involves, forms part of morals, inasmuch as it is included, under certain conditions which are in fact realised, under the law of mankind.

Secondly, the Church remarks that the detachment of morals from the doctrines of which she is the keeper results in the most distressing intellectual anarchy. All the notions on which it was justifiably thought that morality rested: *good,* and then *duty,* through which good plays its regulative part; *obligation,* by means whereof it binds us; *conscience,* which is the prophet of its power in us; *virtue,* through which it bends us to bring about lasting effects; *sanction,* which finishes the work and procures for it its result of happiness; all these notions are contested, scouted, judged immoral by some, banned, I do not say by quacks and revellers, but by the gravest of University professors, graduated teachers and illustrious thinkers of independent standing.

We have come to maintain anything and everything; morals and the absence of morals; the *morality of the weak,* as some have called the notions more or less related to the Gospel, and the *morality of the strong,* which allows everything and permits everything to be ruined for the sake of the *superman.* Some say: Let us draw up the rules; others say: There are no rules, there are only facts, like those of nature and ruled by the like determinism. Some say: Conscience before all—especially before the Church; others say: The law, that is the majority, is the rule of conscience.

In discussing particular doctrines, and personal, family, and social morals, the most appalling divergencies come to light. Some advocate suicide, some homicide in the name of the passions, debauchery disguised under the sacred name

of love, adultery as "a heart's right," divorce or free union in the name of the "right to happiness," class-war instead of class-concord, national egoism or international egoism which brings us back to the isolated individual disguised as humanitarianism. We hear all sorts of things; we see every sort of thing systematised. Very learned books and very weighty articles express opinions of every kind on matters in which unanimity is the condition, if not of higher success, at any rate of making a first start in human life.

The Church looks on, and this, if it were not so sad, would be her triumph. Throughout the centuries she has made moral unity. She has not always secured a perfect practice of it; mankind is very frail, and because it is frail, it resists, it is pulled in all directions by formidable forces of interior and exterior anarchy, a poor divided thing which seems to be withstanding good influences and which is yet only a victim of evil. But at least the direction was marked out; it was accepted; persons and groups marched, some with a sublime gait, most with a lagging tread, all with convinced mind, on the eternal journey. The "great pair of wings," as Taine said in speaking of the faith, made the human race feel the wind of the open air, even when toiling on the earth.

The bird's mere gait betrays his wings.

Now we are deprived of this help. Now we have reached complete disintegration. There is no longer any moral unity. From time to time there is an attempt to constitute something that may be one, and this effort is a confession; but the result is that by dint of hammering the beams, sometimes one, sometimes another, with the pretence of strengthening the woodwork, nothing can be seen but broken arches, gaping joints, and in the damaged rooms, one may think, certain folk are still dreaming of sawing logs, if not of breaking matches.

This result was to be expected, considering the immensity of the problems to which the principles of the moral life are seen to be attached as soon as they come under discussion. The world, man, the meaning of his destinies, all things and the all of things are here involved.

The faith is a short cut; it throws a bridge over the abysses; it joins God, and man, and the world in a harmonious whole whose laws are quite simple, in spite of partial complexities; it puts in a few pages the whole code of life as the Man-God preached it. But philosophies, and much more science, which is no good in this connection, whatever some people may think of it, have not this resource. They have struggled hard, but they have done nothing. That which they have appeared to do was at bottom only a disguised loan, and what they thus had done in appearance they have persistently

undone, until there has supervened that incredible chaos which every sincere and instructed man witnesses to-day.

Our Church notes this, and declares that it is necessary to reverse the engine; that she alone, with her Christ, has the words of life which can reassure men's consciences. Her moral code is morality itself even as her God is God Himself. The others are either borrowings without unity or deviations of which some are of incalculable scope.

Thirdly, the Church claims that, even were they assured of their teaching, the moral systems detached from her action are powerless to rule life in practice. Our nature is too disastrously weak. It needs to be stimulated, guarded, helped, relieved. *Stimulated,* by bringing into play all its resources, which religion knows and satisfies, whereas pure reason addresses only the abstract part of our soul. Pure reason flies in an aeroplane past the windows of humanity and utters its word in passing; but who is there that lives with it?

Guarded—man's nature wants to be guarded by the influence of an environment which is a society of the good, regularly working to call forth what is good, instead of that individualism in which some wish to enclose the moral life.

It must be *helped* by means which are adapted to mankind, but which surpass mankind, since universal tradition makes it plain that without a higher aid the moral life neither endures, nor uplifts itself, nor extends in a manner that satisfies us. There is need of that inward God, of whom Socrates' *Daimon* was the symbol, and who for us is the Holy Spirit, the Worker of grace, He *who crieth in us: Father! Father!* and who will not let us leave Him, that superhuman Focus to which we are all directed by Christ, all we children of the Infinite made finite, in us, by a condescension of love, all we coheirs of the eternal heritage.

Lastly, our nature needs to be *relieved* in all cases, even if a relative fidelity preserves us from great disasters. It is only so, humanly, by the helps of which religious psychology holds the secrets; divinely, by the institutions which apply to us the redemptive effort.

To let the Blood of the Cross flow by permitting the Church to pour it forth, in order that we may all be that which we ought to be, that is human beings not merely human, in a world made new by the Spirit, nor any more human beings weakened individually by vices, in our families by disorders and divisions, socially by anarchy or despotism in all their forms; but Christians, that is human beings complete in God and in association together; such is the programme for our Church. And there is the whole of it.

All moral systems which exclude her morality are then self-condemned in her eyes by this very fact. Those which

wish to correct it are abuses; those which wish to surpass it enter upon a doctrinal emptiness which is the prelude of their practical powerlessness.

This is no reason for the Church refusing to see the Good wherever it is. She is all the more disposed to it in this case for having, as we have just seen, recognised her own good in the Churches adverse but useful to her.

But it is her ardent prayer that these scattered gleams may some day be united into one blaze, because that is a vital necessity. Let us never forget that she is the *rock* on which the noble flame of human life must ascend.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TO CIVILISATION IN GENERAL

IF our Church's nature, and therefore her office, explain her attitude to dissenting religious bodies, to the systems of morality which depend on these religions or claim to be free from all religion, they also explain the Church's attitude to civilisation and its various manifestations.

Before we begin to consider this matter in detail, it will not be inopportune to cast a glance at it as a whole, and to say how civilisation in general and the Church as she is can have relations with each other; what agreement is possible between them, and what antagonisms are to be foreseen.

The question is an interesting one, and important to a degree that it is unnecessary to emphasise.

Civilisation, in the highest sense of the word, may be defined as a sufficiently advanced state of humanity, understanding this word *humanity,* while expressing a positive reality, to call up also an ideal, namely what man ought to endeavour to become in order to answer to his destiny in this world.

To enlarge the sense of the word thus may appear to some critics a defiance of the dictionary. But in any case everyone takes *civilisation* to connote a sufficient political organisation; a somewhat advanced state of science, art, industry, commerce, finance; a store of literature and philosophy; and an established *élite* which sets progress in motion.

And we are asking what the Church's attitude is and should be with regard to these things.

Such a question, in truth, might seem to be solved in advance. We have only to bring our memory into play. We have defined the Church as a synthesis of man and of God, through Christ and the Spirit of Christ, to secure supernatural ends. Now a synthesis of man and God must include all that man is, as it includes all that God is. We have insisted many times already that nothing that belongs to man is outside the scope either in law or in fact of genuine religion. We are not discarnate; but God is incarnate. We have not to give up our interest, but God readily deigns to interest Himself in human life. Since He thought well to create this life, He thinks well also to set it in motion and to urge it on to the utmost; for with God to make is to finish; what is not finished is not really done, and so not divinely done.

The difference between the start and the continuance or

the end of this work is that God, who made us without our co-operation, does not complete us without our co-operation. He has made us not only beings but causes; not only creatures but creators. He does not make civilisation but wills that we should. He does so with us inasmuch as He is bound to our life by means of His universal presence and by the bond of religion. The Church, which is the society resulting from this bond, can then only be favourable to this work in the persons of those who truly represent her.

Whence should arise, then—or rather whence do arise, for there are such things—difficulties between the Church and certain claims supposed to further civilisation?

They may arise from two causes. Either the elements of the proposed civilisation are out of order, or this human order is cut off from all connection with the divine, which ought to be its law and its last end, since it is its source. Hence we divine all the conflicts likely to ensue.

Human life is a harmony. Each element, though as precious as you like in itself, is only precious in relation to the whole if it keeps in its place, governing what it ought to govern, but also remaining in subordination to what is superior to it, and not making the serpent crawl with its head behind or its tail in front.

Material civilisations which neglect spiritual culture are not approved by high-minded men, and they cannot aspire to the approval of the Church. Scientific, literary, artistic civilisations which neglect morality can hope for it even less; for such civilisations, which claim to progress and do in fact progress, though not in the right road, diverge even more from her, and are better equipped for evil.

Better, in the Church's eyes, the Bedouin, without culture, but loyal and of good morals, than the coarse industrial exploiter or the lettered pirate. She is no fonder of romantic Bohemianism, nor of shameless naturalism, nor that subtle sensualism which can use as a title for its books the words that someone once told me he had seen on a letter-heading: *Misconduct and discretion.*

In a speech one day at the French Academy[1] it was said that the Church, though it should seem Bœotian in consequence, does not approve that pure dilettante literature whose purity signifies dangerous sentimentalism in the first degree and corruption in the second. The third, not long in following, means deliquescence, enervation of the mind of the public, social weakness, and a retrograde movement along one or other of the paths which open immediately to corrupt societies; in a word, barbarism, which justifies the opposition manifested at the start with a truly maternal foresight.

[1] Speech of M. le Comte de Mun, in reply to M. de Régnier's speech at his reception.

Lastly and especially—we say especially, because to this, though by hidden cords, all the rest is attached—our Church is not willing that human civilisation, however perfect it may be to-day, should compromise itself to-morrow, and render itself useless even for to-day, with regard to the *one thing necessary,* by loosening its ties with the divine.

For her, to neglect God is to confine herself to what is notoriously insufficient; to return to that nothingness of humanity which it was her desire to heal, by setting our little life, through Christ, who has taken it all upon Himself, in harmony once more with Him, who is Himself great, and can greaten it; who can strengthen it, because He is Master of what oppresses and slays us; sanctify it, being Himself the Spirit of sanctity; deliver it, because He is the Liberty which we, who are slaves of all things, emulate and invoke; make it eternal, because He is Himself eternal, and fill it with all that is lacking to that unsatiated being which is His child, because He is Fulness, infinite and infinitely loving.

To flee in this manner the divine salvation that is offered to our wretched and mortal life; to refuse redemption; to become hypnotised by the transitory, to wall oneself up in it and to close on oneself, as it were, the stone of the tomb, in order to pursue a so-called development in the space of time which the delay of death leaves to the still-living corpse in which it works is a kind of civilisation which leaves the thinker in great melancholy when he leans on the stele where human ambitions are written but to die; when he considers from a higher level the exhausted haste of this race to the abyss in which the competitors, with their numbers on their backs in the form of their titles and records, succeed each other with lamentable and noisy theories.

Our Church, which is not held back by melancholy, eager as she is to act and to save, is not only saddened, but irritated by this attitude. She sees there, no longer as she did just now the relative retrogression which makes the summits of temporal life be left for its lower levels; but the absolute retrogression which draws back into nothingness the creature that was borne up by divine adoption into the Infinite.

That, let us note well, is what is meant in the famous declaration of the *Syllabus* opposing the proposition that *the Church can fall in with modern civilisation.*

We know well what this phrase *modern civilisation* meant under Pius IX., and we know well what some mean by it to-day. Modern civilisation is what others call lay society, and in the case of the worst of them it means war on the Church, and consequently impossibility on the part of the latter to enter into agreement with it; but for the best of

them, *i.e.*, of the class above-mentioned, it is still the denial of the work of the Church; for in the first place it is hostile to those individual, domestic or social regulations of which she claims to be the guardian, believing them indispensable to the salvation of mankind; and in the second place, it is hostile, just because it denies or despises the higher direction of life.

It would like to get along without God; to organise itself without Him; to be at ease among interests and objects in which He counts for nothing; to govern the lives of individuals, families, corporations, cities and international groups by means of principles opposed to His or ignorant of His, and afterwards, with a disdainful condescension for the sake of peace and good relations with those who believe in Him, it would be quite willing to let Him sit at its board, always provided, of course, that He is given His place, *i.e.*, the lowest of all.

A politician would be asked to take the chair; on his right a banker, on his left a journalist, all around actors, chemists, generals, novelists, manufacturers, painters, and at the bottom, if indeed He did not stand napkin in hand to help the waiters, they would put God, who would thus show good feeling and conciliate *modern civilisation.*

No! Neither God, nor the Church on God's behalf, will be content with such a conciliation as this. God means to be what He is; the Church means Him to be so. And God, being what He is, has a right not only to the first place, but even in a way to the whole place, and God Himself is the Host of humanity.

We need not see in this a transcendent pride. God is not proud: God who in the person of His Christ rubbed shoulders with the slum-dwellers of Jerusalem and accepted the death-sentence of a slave! But this humble Infinity desires a place that will allow Him to play His part. Not that He needs it; it is we that need it, we who are nothing unless He is all.

When God gets the second place, and above all the last place, He becomes no good to us. To make Him subordinate to anything is to get rid of Him by blaspheming Him, for God does good to man by giving Him a law, as He has given him existence, thus procuring man's final attainment. What good can He be, if man's life ever came to be organised without Him, driven on to aims entirely terrestrial, if not indeed infernal, committed to paths altogether carnal, which lead through illusion to end in death?

He could only follow in the wake of this mad career. And can we conceive the Creator assisting His creation to destroy itself? When the creature has shut up its life in the nothingness that all reality is apart from God, can we imagine God appearing to say: It is well; in the nothing-

ness that you have accepted, I, I AM, will be your accomplice and servant?

This is a satanic conception if we reflect on it. It is the sin of Lucifer, who wished to put himself in the place of the Eternal, and not content with saying *I will not serve,* wished to add : *Let God serve!*

Graver still will be the conflict, we need hardly add, if to this false liberalism, which is already a revolt, declared hostility be added, and if the civilisation with which we are faced be in great part an attack on what the Church stands for.

If "*science*" be presented as an antithesis to dogma, "*philosophy*" as a contempt of all our doctrinal positions, "*positive*" morality as ignorance of the good, "*business*" as injustice and systematised usury, "*politics*" as anti-clericalism, and "*literature*" as a continual slander of all that concerns religion, what shall we Christians say of such a civilisation as this?

We shall say of it what our fathers said of the rage or mockery of paganism; we shall call it diabolical. And we shall add, as did Lactantius, Basil, Augustine, that the devil may be of service, since God is stronger than he, and can force him to draw the carriage even with the bit between his teeth. But inasmuch as this civilisation in itself contemns God and persecutes His work, let us be its barbarians, as St. Paul was ready to be, if so he might embrace the foolishness of the Cross.

It is always true that what is thus condemned is not really civilisation, but its counterfeit or its cessation. Counterfeit if it combats truth and good by means of error and vice; cessation if it brings forward partial truths as able to satisfy, perishable goods as productive of contentment.

Civilised barbarism : that is how the Church names these two things. When we have once understood what the Church is, such an attitude on her part ought to seem quite natural.

Still more natural, on the positive side, seems the help which she affords to every kind of civilisation in the true sense, while refraining from making such civilisation her proper end.

Bringing into the world God and all the influences of God; applying His action to the very centre of our creative activity; to our mind, in order to prevent it from straying; to our will, to maintain the equilibrium between the perverse laxity and a meddlesome temperance; to our sanctified senses, to keep them from the exhausting pleasures into which, as we know so well, the most evident effort of civilisation is put; thus acting, together with God, upon man, the Church shows herself to be a power for civilisation comparable to no other.

In the measure in which she herself penetrates more deeply the secret of her being—for she progresses, as we have said, *increasing in age and wisdom,* like her Christ, *before God and men;* in the measure in which she brings to the surface in an ever-increasing number of intellects the truths that she possesses, and in an ever-increasing number of hearts the mighty desires that she conceives, she grows and will grow as a factor in the work of civilisation.

The Gospel has hardly begun its work; but it has time before it, and the Church which wields it is neither shaken by feverish haste nor stopped by discouragement. She has espoused the Eternal, and this divine Spouse has revealed to her the secret of the sublime gestations that have produced the heavenly spaces and their nebulæ, the suns and their planets, the flora and fauna of the earth, the beginnings of humanity, continuing and to be perfected, if they will, that is to say if they do not abuse the terrible privileges which their liberty confers upon them.

The progress of humanity for its own sake alone requires our faithfulness to God, union with His Christ, all of us together, and consequently the admitted co-operation of our Church.

God does not abandon man; man must not abandon God, by releasing his hold on the Hand of flesh which God uses to make the chain.

United to the Church, to Christ, to God, it is the same thing. Through this co-operation civilisation does its work; without it it slays us; this is the truth which must be recognised, before we see in detail how this affirmation is verified in the various domains in which the genius of civilisation operates.

CHAPTER VI

MATERIAL CIVILISATION

IT would be possible to doubt whether material civilisation is to be allowed to benefit by our general proposition, in such wise that the Church, in theory and in fact, should show itself friendly to it; for it is very certain that the Church has no desire to make us become attached to this world. We cleave closely enough to it already by natural gravitation. At each moment she recalls to us the *vanitas vanitatum* of Ecclesiastes. She predicts the end of all things, and the end of ourselves. She agrees with science in telling us : Heaven and earth will pass away, and with that gaze which she fixes on eternity she sees already realised that towards which all things are proceeding. The way of all flesh is marked out by her with inscriptions wherein she says : *What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?*

It may be said that this is not very encouraging for industry, navigation, commerce, agriculture, mines or transport. Perhaps not ! But nevertheless I see that the Church has a hand, either herself or through the best of her children, in all that is great and beneficial in the world. I see that it is her monks who cleared Europe; that she has rehabilitated work, when pagan dilettantism had abandoned it to slaves; that her liturgy, which is the rule of her faith, as the axiom *Lex orandi lex credendi* expresses it, provides petitions and blessings for everything, we might say, that bears any relation to our life, even the most material aspects of it—to our interests, even those most exclusively temporal—for our houses, our fountains, our fields, our farms with their domestic animals, our granaries with their wheat, our factories, our limekilns, our railways, our bridges, our telegraphs and telephones, our ships, and, in these days, our aeroplanes.

And fearing lest she should forget anything that was of interest to us, desiring to foresee even that which could not be foreseen, she has blessings *ad omnia, ad quæcumque volueris;* a blessing of all things, which are in her thought a benediction of life, of all life, provided that life consent to find its value by attaching itself to what alone has a value *per se;* provided that in the prayer that she provides to supply the need it is agreed that she may express this thought, which is the Church's thought concerning material civilisation : *that, O Lord, we may so pass through things temporal that finally we lose not those which are eternal* (Collect for the third Sunday after Pentecost).

The temporal in our life is that which passes; the eternal, that which remains. But we must thoroughly understand that what passes, if it be united to that which remains, may also acquire an eternal value; for it is our whole life, the material as well as the rest, which is moved by the great current of divinity.

We must repeat what we have already said concerning civilisation in general; you cannot make us discarnate, but God becomes incarnate, God, who through His Christ takes upon Himself the reality of our flesh. Now our flesh is in continuity with its natural environment and needs to conquer it. Life is a borrowing. By means of food we borrow from our environment in order to support life; by material civilisation, we borrow from our environment to enrich life. Our discoveries and their exploitation are as it were an enterprise to extend our members, to develop their forces, to second their effort by multiplying it, to make of the whole something that may be used as a lever, the lever of Archimedes, destined to raise the world.

Religion, then, by divinising man, by divinising his flesh, of which it makes a *temple of the Holy Ghost,* must divinise the continuations of his flesh, the riches with which it is increased, its successive assimilations.

God becoming incarnate in man, individually in Christ, socially in the Church, takes for His integral Body, if we may so say, all the realisations incorporated with human life, unless they themselves are detached from it and become corrupt.

Civilisation, if it consents to be Christian—I mean material civilisation—is an incarnation extended further, expanding into nature, which thus participates in the supernatural; a humble body of God, into which the soul, which is the Holy Spirit, pushes its way.

St. Paul said that by accepting our sufferings and wishing them to be redemptive, we fill up what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ; but in this case it is a question of filling up what is lacking in the Incarnation, by incorporating with it tamed nature, and our natural surroundings conquered for human life sanctified by grace and divinised by its human-divine Head.

Our Church, which is *Catholic*—and we know that this means universal in the widest sense—cannot then stand aloof. It has no more right to *dematerialise* itself, in this sense, than it has to *disincarnate* itself, seeing that it rests on the Incarnation.

The truth is that our Church, though connected with all things, yet does not find in everything a point to work on. The scholar is no engineer, nor is the engineer an artisan, the artisan is no labourer, nor the labourer a tool. But in the

chain of action that is thus formed, the work of the scholar, apparently seeking no interests, is beneficial to the engineer, the artisan, the labourer and the tool. He even benefits them the more the more he is disinterested, that is the more he is absorbed in fruitful thoughts, far from immediate application, far from the public and their expectations.

The public does not know this. It is realisations that appeal to the man in the street. The aeroplane has more success than Newton's calculations, and Pasteur owes his renown rather to his treatment for hydrophobia than to his general theories the application of which will come to light throughout the ages. But it is so none the less. The ivory tower of the thinker is like the calm and white summit of the snow-topped mountains from which the streams of life and fertility rush down in waterfalls or constantly filter through.

So the Church, giving herself up solely to her work of sanctification, does more for material civilisation in the measure that she disdains it, so to speak; that is to say puts it in its place among her interests, and refuses to be involved in it at the cost of deserting the high peaks of the spiritual life.

St. Augustine, in his work *On the greatness of the Soul* (*De Quantitate Animæ*) assigns seven degrees to the development of life. The first is common to us and the plants (*animatio*), the second with the animals (*sensus*); the third, which is the capacity for civilisation taken in the material sense (*ars*) is already confined to us, but it is the lowest rung of the human ladder; there are four more above it, and those who wish to put it at the head take a place already reserved, and moreover, make the ladder overturn, as the result of being top-heavy.

Moral forces are the support and safeguard of material forces. It is the soul which by definition *animates* the body and preserves it from the decomposition of the corpse. Mounting higher, we may say : The supernatural guards the natural, of which it is the soul.

Those who claim that our preaching of the nothingness of all things, that is of the nothingness of all things without God, and of the relative nothingness of the material life in regard to the spiritual life, is a kind of stupefactive influence which discourages progress, ignore or forget the most fundamental conditions of life. The best friend of material civilisation is not the impassioned illuminism which wishes to make of it an all, a thing in itself; it is a considered appreciation, which puts everything in its place and allows nothing to leave it. He who thinks that material life is everything, or that it is the principal thing, sacrifices to it that which is really the best, but also, and this foolishly and blameworthily,

sacrifices to it the very thing which in the final analysis is what produces it all, namely, moral values, and he uses means which begin by depreciating it and finally kill it, namely, vices.

Matter does not stand by itself alone; it is the energy of souls which causes it to rise to mighty and lasting realisations. And the energy of souls itself needs to be held in, harmonised, preserved against deviations. And what can do this better than that Christian virtue, which, putting in relation with God all that belongs to humanity, sets us in harmony, making our law of action the creative thought itself, whereof the reflection in the reason, in nature, in our labours, wherein reason and nature are mingled, is this very thing that is called civilisation.

The Church, by consecrating herself to the interior virtues and seeming to despise all the rest, works for all the rest in this way more than anyone. By adopting as her speciality the exclusive or almost exclusive contemplation of the Kingdom of Heaven, she prepares the best triumphs for all the kingdoms of time. "A strange thing it is, this religion," wrote Montesquieu in an oft-quoted phrase, "which, although it means to occupy itself only with the interests of the other life, yet succeeds better than aught else in safeguarding those of this."

Those who *use this world as those who use it not* are those who use it well, and who husband its future, because they treat it with respect, instead of only pushing it on feverishly to realisations in order to devour it immediately in selfish ends.

A so-called civilised man of Arkansas eats up a forest in a year to make bad paper on which to print bad books, and he cares nothing about replanting, because he can make his fortune in ten years, and after then, the deluge! The old monks planted and respected the young trees, the hope of the soil and of its sources. It is a parable. All life is thus.

When we are told that our Church dwells in another world, that is true; but the world in which she dwells is the guardian of this world and gives it all that it possesses. Heaven radiant with light and fruitful heat; the hidden or visible source of all the beneficial activities of this world; the remedy of everything in it that breeds death or sets traps for life; that is what the Church insists on making us see. After that she has no need to put her shoulder to the wheel of our conveyances. She does so sometimes; but more often it is her duty to put on the brake, not to pull up—she forbids us to pull up, and makes a rule of work—but to keep us from falling, when we recklessly begin going down hill.

Instinct is there to stimulate us under the name of ambi-

tion; to bring us to a standstill, under the name of sloth; to turn aside and use up our strength, under the name of devouring sensuality, destructive anger, engrossing pride, avarice, alcoholism, absurd and sterilising overwork. The Church is there to stop us when necessary, to stimulate us when necessary and always to put us right.

And what she does for individuals she does for the ages. In the barbaric ages she applied her hands to cultivating the earth; it is she who began the exploitation, no small task, of France, which is now ready to accuse her of barbarism. To-day, when the work is well started and our own times possess and abuse it, it is not for her to urge it on. Neither does she hold it back; but she regularises it, and seeks to increase the benefits of progress without doing wrong to its ultimate end, but rather helping that end, and under it, all others as well.

Harmony, harmony is the name of our Church. Individual wisdom and agelong wisdom : such, if she were heard, would be the high results of her action.

For the material alone she has no use. She knows too well what is its cost both to the poor hallucinated souls that it seduces, and to the work of God on earth. Her Christ, who sums up in Himself man and God, has suffered too much from this hindrance both to His Divinity and His sanctifying Humanity.

Was not the divine *Worm of the earth* crushed under this weight; did He not dolorously withstand the weight of this rock with all His strength? To raise the material and set the spirit free was an immense part of His lot. He toiled at this so long and in such wise, with so much devoted but inflexible provocation that the material at last revolted. It was the material that pursued Him in the hate of the financiers of the Temple; it was the material that became an accomplice in the indifference of the Roman inclined to carnal greatness, and it was the material too which urged the people to enthusiasm before a miracle of multiplied bread, but scattered them again, making them a symbol of the general forsaking of their spiritual Christ.

To conquer this power of oppression for the benefit of all that would follow Him, Christ was obliged to burden it with His Cross, like the log brandished by a giant; like the gates of Gaza which Samson took up to his hill.

Having come to Golgotha, exhausted, He laid down His flesh there. He melted it like the precious metal in the alloy, in order to change its essence. He raised it; He uttered in it the hosanna of victory along with the anguish of sacrifice, and dying, through His wounds gaping towards heaven, He caused it to break forth transmuted into soul. His death was the triumph of the spirit, and for the flesh itself, for

the material which continues it, there was the hope of resurrection and final apotheosis.

If it was necessary thus to crucify the material to wash it from its stains, it is not for us to take it out of the current of redemption to exploit it anew as pagans, without reflecting on the conditions of its usefulness, the danger of abusing it, the omnipotence for evil which it may reveal and the merely relative power it exercises for good.

Let us leave it in the current. Let the divine Blood bathe it and the Holy Spirit penetrate it. Itself may be divine too; but at the cost of how great a moral effort! Humanity hardly supplies this effort. Let us leave the Church, then, defiant and maternal, scolding and yet blessing, comprehending all tasks, and at need undertaking them, wishing to see them accomplished, but also to see them surpassed by the spiritual and Christian élan of all souls.

She who has made specially her own the *One Thing Necessary* must fill our eyes with it as well as her own, like the placid beast of the poem, which, gently ruminating on the grass, not revolting against the laws of life, content with the field, resting on the ground, but with gaze raised higher than the level of the sheaves, reflected all heaven in its eyes, and thus taught man how to uplift his eyes to God.

CHAPTER VII

INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

IN considering intellectual culture, the forced restrictions lately mentioned will apparently break down, and attachment to knowledge will be one of the Church's characteristics.

Many apologists, indeed, stop short there. They show the Church as the candle-bearer who maintains indispensable truths in the world. She protects others, they say, by appointing herself from the very start of her successful career the admirer of the ancient civilisations, the preserver and propagator of their labours, the first centre of the sciences, the founder of Universities and popular schools, the inspirer of the most remarkable works of philosophy, letters and poetry in every age to which her empire has extended.

What they say is pure truth. And it is an excellent reply to those scornful, spiteful and consequently short-sighted arguments which accuse the Church of systematic obscurantism, of retrograde tendencies in the name of immutability, of fanaticism with an eye to the perpetuation of her authority, as if only under cover of darkness could her dogmas live and her influence reign over the stupid.

But yet this is not the whole truth. We must go beyond these two arguments *pro* and *con,* of which one is untrue and injurious, the other true, but incomplete and incapable of affording by itself an interpretation of all the facts.

Once more then, as always, we ask : What is the Church? It is the organisation of life with a view to its supernatural ends. And what are its supernatural ends? The perfecting of man by his expansion into the divine. But how can the divine thus break into the paltry life of man in order to transfigure it? Evidently, through the higher window of our soul. The spirit, united to God who is Spirit, will live intelligibly in the infinite riches of the Ineffable, and it is only as a consequence that there will bud in the unity of our being the happiness for which we thirst, and to which we have a right, manifold complexities that we are.

With regard to the last end, then, intellect is in the foreground. It is the tool of destiny, since it is the instrument by which we can effect that laying hold of God from which result for us all the good things summed up in the word *beatitude. This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, O Father.*

Hence arises the Church's preference, astonishing to some people, for the contemplative life as opposed to the active life. It is man's philosophy that desires it; it was an Aristotelian thesis before it was a theological one. In any case,

it is the clearly affirmed thought of the Church, and this leads us to suppose that the Church, since it thus makes its one thing necessary consist in light, is not after all an enemy of the light.

But we must add immediately that this light, in which the last end consists, is not to be attained by any average human effort. It surpasses man. For our understanding, armed with every kind of knowledge though it be, it is what the sun is for the owl. The learned man, the man who rises even to genius, gets no nearer to it than if he were to use a pebble as a stepping-stone towards the stars; a sterile and even a childish effort, although by thus stepping on a pebble one really does get nearer the stars.

It is not knowledge, then, *qua* knowledge, which is going to help us attain the goal. The smallest atom of charity would be of more use; for it is being made ready for our effort of virtue. It is to be hoped for, then, not by the student as student; not by him who tries to empty the ocean of eternal truth with his thimble; but by the man who, whether student or shepherd, rises to the level of his object by loving God, and so takes possession of the divine Truth which is Himself for to-morrow, when the veils are taken away.

The science of Pasteur, the culture of Goethe or Leibnitz, the philosophy of Aristotle or Plato, all this, left to itself, is farther, indeed, from the real conquest of the truth than the simplicity of a Christian child or the charity of the nun in her humble head-dress.

Charity in the widest sense of the word, that is the love of the divine Good and of all that reflects it, especially in ourselves and our brethren; such is, for our Church, the path of knowledge, inasmuch as it is the goal of life.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . . though I have understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge . . . if I have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

These texts tell us whether the Church is going to put knowledge first! She esteems it; she declares that in theory, considered absolutely, knowledge is superior to virtue itself, because it is the goal of virtue. We are virtuous in order to be made perfect in value, in God, and this perfection is substantially *knowledge*. But while we are still wayfarers, these values are reversed. Virtue takes the first place. For the traveller, who expects a fortune at the end of his journey, his essential business is not to gather twigs on the way, though they may have their value. His essential business is to get there. We are travellers. What speeds our journey is for us true riches. If it be knowledge, as it is for the Christian teacher, for the professional scholar, the professional or the

amateur who does his work thoroughly; then, hurrah for knowledge! We can never rate it too highly.

But if knowledge is an obstacle, if it is a reflection instead of the sun; if duty demands that it be abandoned, or suggests prudence concerning it, or defers its delights till later, in this world or the world to come; then up with duty! *It is better,* says the Gospel, *to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the fire of hell.* It is better to open the eye of the spirit, even if one must shut or only half open the other, than to be shut out from the kingdom of those that see.

Thus, the Church's point of view is clearly indicated. If some be scandalised, she gives no heed to the muddled pharisaism of the mandarins of mind. If to honour knowledge means putting it above all else, she will not do it. Neither blindly *pro,* nor basely *con,* nor yet *indifferent;* such, in three words, is the Church's attitude.

But if, with all this, we think of the various circumstances amid which the Church has developed, and still leads her life to-day, we shall have an explanation of all the facts.

At the beginning, the Church had to form herself, to indicate her transcendent end, to declare her position above all that is transient, to oppose in order to preserve and differentiate herself from all that might hurt her as from all that might claim to absorb her. The culture of those times was hostile. When it penetrated within, it was very often with the claim to impose itself, by substituting an arbitrary teaching for true dogma, a *gnosis,* as it did so often, *making void the Cross of Christ,* as St. Paul said, and calling for those famous warnings: *Be wise soberly, God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; We have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that comes from God, that we may know the things God has given us by His grace* (1 Cor. ii.).

To make our minds thus *captives of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* this is the work that must be done. We have to get into tune with God through Christ. Thus we shall have all that wisdom seeks, though we be deprived of the means of wisdom. Otherwise we shall have nothing, though we be the wisest of the wise. The knowledge which takes this away is man's enemy; we repudiate it, we condemn it; not in itself, but in its deviation, because it sets itself up as an obstacle to that supreme knowledge which communion with the life of God outlines in every Christian and will one day impart to every Christian.

Later, the surroundings change. From the third century, the Church has conquered or almost conquered all that matters from the intellectual point of view. Her doctrine is fixed. She still has to strive against deviations; but she has no

longer to make herself known; she can look round her and make use—as the Fathers of the fourth century did extensively enough, God knows—of all the culture that surrounds her. It is at this period that "the infant Church, like her Christ, is *seated in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions,* making her own the truths they put forward, correcting their errors, supplying their insufficiencies, correcting their rough outlines, developing their intuitions, and thus, little by little and thanks to them, giving her teaching more and more breadth and precision."

These words are Newman's, and they will explain the feeling of our Church. The great thinkers of Christianity, men like Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Bossuet—I mention only the very greatest—endeavoured to understand everything, reflected all the knowledge of their times, and without *giving themselves up* to knowledge, serving Christ alone, they passionately loved it and bore it even higher because they did not accept its shackles.

By their side, a crowd of specialists of all kinds have built up knowledge, the Church applauding them. When she found fault with them apart from mistakes—for a human-divine society is not free from the possibility of human mistakes—it was because they opposed or seemed to oppose what it was her office to defend. Then she has been of iron, and respect has not been able to make her prize in man's field of enquiry what resists God. But that is not rejecting culture; it is purifying it, and therefore sanctifying it and striving to make it entirely divine.

Look at what the Church opposes and approves to-day, and you will prove the same thing.

That pride, that intoxication of which the whole of the last century was the victim and which risked misleading thought, throwing it into the most serious aberrations; the exclusive use of certain methods, which pushed aside as illusions the noblest truths that were above such methods; perverting errors; denials which throw us back, far from the high dignity of the Christian, into the lowest depths of materialism deified in words, but left for us in fact to its wretchedness and nothingness; these things, but only these, are what the Church has condemned and does condemn.

These condemnations she will not recall. She will not bow down to knowledge at such a cost. She will lift her eyes yet higher. And if it be said that she is the enemy of atheist, materialist or agnostic science, it is the truth. Who can wonder?

If it be said even that she is the enemy of *independent* science, science independent systematically, not in its methods, which are rightly so, but in the human use of its endeavour and its whole attitude, pretending to ignore divine

facts and their revelation by Christ, and thus running the risk of trampling them under foot, while its teachers profess to bow before the smallest experimental fact and to sacrifice all systems to it; if it be said that the Church is the enemy of all that, it is still true, because the independence of human thought in relation to the divine is a refusal of unity which she is obliged to call a revolt. *He who is not with me is against me,* she must still say, although it be also true to add : *He that is not against you is with you.*

Let us repeat : Science taken in itself and as to its methods, if it keeps in its place and does not leave it, is friendly to the Church, just because it is independent. But the dualism of *oratory and laboratory* which is so pleasant to some people is not admitted by the Church. Dualism is a heresy in everything. Unity must reign, without either confusion or scattering, because the one God, the bond of that universal sheaf whose ears are gathered together by Christ, will let nothing fall. Through Him all reaches its end; without Him nothing has a value for the morrow, nor even subsists in full stability to-day.

Truth then is the subordination, not of science, we repeat, taken in itself, but of science in relation to its ends and the results, be they good or evil, of its work.

Lastly, let us add that the Church, if she loves culture, and yet accords it a relative, not an absolute value, must guard against the impatience in which from time to time we would like to see her share.

The Church does not love intellectual fashions, because they are carried to excess, like other fashions. She approves no more of hats a yard wide, from the doctrinal point of view, than of hats that consist of a single flower. She likes to see heads covered, and she likes them to be able to pass through doors. Man does not pass through the door of truth when he insists on a point of view at the expense of what completes it, corrects it, and makes it true.

So, *theoretically,* gross realism and Utopian idealism, materialism and extra-scientific spiritualism; *practically,* anarchic liberalism and oppressive authoritarianism, pessimism and pagan optimism, etc., all these deviations to the right or the left which successively, always with pretensions to eternity and infallibility, succeed each other in the history, so glorious and yet so sad, of human thought, are equally her adversaries.

This is the principal reason why she appears retrograde.

It is indeed true that she is slow in adapting herself, even to the truth; a great army does not advance like a soldier's child, and moreover there is in the religious principle itself a tendency to fixity which has to be set at defiance where it is

not relevant. But the cause of men's irritation against the Church does not lie here. The cause of irritation is that, careful of the truth that remains, she does not adapt herself at all to childish mistakes, to exaggerations, to fads. But it is to such things as we have enumerated that men hold, because such things are themselves, are *their* truth, though it be only imperfectly, or very little, or not at all *the* truth.[1]

Then, the Church is accused of inveterate routine. Men leave her, they say, so that they may progress. When they are but one step from her they turn to strike her. And the Church, venerable though outraged, takes up the attitude of Angelico's Christ, whose calm gaze pierces the veil of derision with which His eyes have been covered that He may be taxed with ignorance; and, assailed with blows, befouled with spittle, holds none the less between her ever firmly clasped hands the ball of the world.

Let the Church of Christ be divinely uncompromising, too great to commit herself, although she is benevolent to all men and all things, respectful of every portion of truth and favourable to whoever discovers it, provided that it be left in the great current of human-divine life, that it be submitted to God who is the *Father of lights* and to His Incarnate Word who *enlightens every man who cometh into the world.*

It is by making no pacts with time that the Church can be of service to time, because, while she guards the eternal truths which are compromised by our presumptuous infatuations, she is quite ready for new acquisitions. Scouted to-day, she relies on the morrow, which will in truth bring with it other crises, but will be able to untie the knots of yesterday. In spite of her apparent retreats, which are only regular stepping-stones for an advance from stage to stage; always to all appearance behindhand, but never really falling back, a stranger equally to boldness and stagnation, our Church fulfils her course, while her systems, in just the things that most affect life, are weaving Penelope's web.

God's Eternity is in the Church. Through the Spirit which animates her she is above phases of thought. Our partial views cannot dazzle her; but neither can they offend her. Everyone in his station and everything in its place; this is always her motto and her prayer, in every matter, and she needs no other protection.

[1] In the fourth century the Church was called retrograde because she did not square with Homer; later, because she only half accepted Roman law; at the Renascence, because she did not swear by Platonism. In the eighteenth century she did not value English physics sufficiently highly. At the beginning of the nineteenth she was not liberal enough. To-day she is not socialist enough.

CHAPTER VIII

ART

INTELLECTUAL culture includes one special branch which it is well to consider separately, by reason of its particular character and of certain possible misunderstanding. This is art. Art, we mean, considered generally, in all its forms.

The relations between the Church and art are particularly dependent on their respective definitions.

Is not the Church life itself, with its subjects and objects incorporated into God through Christ? And is not art the mirror of life?

In this mirror, whose quicksilvering is the soul of man, things are reflected both in accordance with their own nature and with ours. "Man added to nature;" nature reflected in man; the harmonious synthesis of what we observe of the real and what we experience of the real; that is art.

Now all this is God added to God, if it be true that both in external reality and in man God is revealed. Everything, says St. Augustine, has been created twice; once in itself, and once in the thought of the reasoning creature. The end of art is to form the unity of reality and thought in a work which expresses their common divine life.

Hence there is no mystery about the place of art in the working of the Church herself, and the relations of the Church with the art that is exterior to her. There will be art in the working of the Church because the spiritual, which is the speciality of the Church, requires the temporal, in which is found the use of art, as its support and its means of action.

Have we not attributed to the Church sacramentality, that is, the character in her which demands the union of matter with spirit, of the visible with the invisible, God coming to us and we ascending to Him by the ladder of Jacob, the symbol of the sanctified material reality which binds together earth and heaven?

When the Church, then, seeks to impart God to us, to give us to God, whether it be by means of the sacraments properly so called, or whether it be in a general fashion by worship, by the holy ministry of the word, by external solemnity, art will always find place in these things. If it can, it will give finish to the visible in beauty, otherwise the visible will be only a rough outline. It will speak more perfectly of man and God, and thus aid their union.

The richer the art which is incorporated with the Church, the more will the working of the Church, other things being equal, be what it ought to be, developed to its full efficacy.

Is it not evident that the Mass, for example—the Mass, which we choose, not at hazard, but as the source and centre of all worship—tends of itself to become a liturgy, that is, a work of art?

Instead of the rite of the catacombs, reduced to essentials, to its soul, although in fact a modicum of visibility and art is always found included in it, the Mass, by reason of its very nature and its signification, seeks to expand, to use all the means of expression which can move man, and in return, to honour God, to captivate man with all its resources, our essential capacity for adoration exercising itself to the full and drawing with it the nature that is conjoint with it, while our feelings express themselves in words, in music, in our positions, in a place which is itself a position, a permanent posture of the collective effort of the men who were responsible for its building.

Think of the ideal Mass, which would be the eternal sacrifice of Christ commemorated and reproduced in the presence of the whole of humanity, on that mighty altar whereon the visionary of Patmos placed the throne of the Lamb, in a building vast enough to contain, with God, the human beings of all ages; high enough to indicate at the same time both God who dwells on high and the aspirations which rise to Him; splendid enough to represent, by its lines, reliefs, colours and forms, living or dead, nature and man dwelling with God; full enough of light for the mystic Dove to hover there in the heavenly blue, for the elect and the angels to meet there as they fly in circles round, inviting all men to the more measured movements of liturgic choreography; sonorous enough for the highest hosannas, and lower down, for the sounds, the cries, the chants that express the universal life, the voices of the solitary or the common soul oppressed with feelings or with needs to mingle without confusion, accepting the government of rhythm, entering into the border-lines of melody and into the wave of harmony, the mother of unity ever expanding into richness; think of this, and say if this dream-ceremony, transcending space and time, including space and time, would not be a manifestation of religion at the maximum precisely because it would be a work of art, because it would lend the divine a means of expression in accordance with the universal reality seen in beauty, to absorb it afterwards by a reflex action which would itself be the more religious as the harmonies were richer.

Such a vision would be the Church herself around her central reality, the Eucharist; exercising by God fully manifested and for man fully manifested her rôle of active and passive sanctification. In it we should see the Church push to its limits that sacramentality which is her essence. She would experience it to the greatest possible extent, since the beau-

tiful is also a sacrament, a sensible and operative sign. So that in this apotheosis, we should in a certain manner see the Church in her integral reality identified with the integration of beauty.

Let us now study art that is outside the Church, art that does not enter into her proper work. What are the relations between them? How does she feel about it?

In the first place she says: It has a value in itself. Like science, whose brother it is, since here as there intellectual effort is mistress, although in different respects, it forms a part of the end of life. In itself then, to speak absolutely, it does not want an end. The contemplation of beauty, like the conception of truth, is a self-sufficient occupation. What is called useful art, if it be not useful in the end for that, is only useless, seeing that our last end is the contemplation of the Divine, which is Beauty as it is Truth and Goodness.

Art for art's sake, in this sense, is therefore a higher truth.

But we must immediately add, as we added in reference to knowledge: the last end, at least in the main, is not of this world. We have only anticipations of it, anticipations assuredly precious, but which ought not to cause us to tarry on the road, nor act as an obstacle either to those who enjoy them or to others.

The art which does not take account of this condition, which, on the pretext of its misunderstood independence, confounding the independence of the premisses with the independence of ends, gives itself up to its own will without caring for human progress, without deigning to co-operate in it, allowing itself on occasion to shackle it, producing works which, deliberately or through culpable negligence, by contempt for the common herd, by proud sensual audacity, by venality, by assumed superiority, offend Christian feeling and urge to evil; such art as this is a deviation, and the Church condemns it.

No kind of beauty has a right to interpose between the soul and the eternal Beauty which calls to it. All are reflections of this eternal Beauty; but the reflection which forgets its purpose, and instead of directing the gaze towards the object, seeks to monopolise it for itself or to lower it to false objects, is an imposture, a deceptive mirage which lures the wayfarer from his path or makes him stand still.

Without demanding that the artist should adopt the preaching of the good as his special task, seeing that art has its own relation to the good, the Church means that he should rule his thought and his work in accordance with the common end of all humanity; that he should remember to conduct himself not only as an artist, which would only do for an abstraction, but as a man, a Christian, a brother to his

brethren, a brother to himself, responsible for his own salvation, and in a certain measure for the salvation of all.

But if, not of obligation, but through a positive good will, art consents to collaborate under a direct form with the work of salvation which is the Church's enterprise, we see why the Church must praise it. Christian art is that which acknowledges this vocation; which takes it as its task to express, to arouse, religious sentiment; to relate the facts of religion in order to help in rendering them efficacious; to make us see nature, mankind, history, from the religious angle which dogma determines, speaking of God in order to attract man to Him; speaking of man in his need of God and his fellowship with God.

We know well enough how much our Church has been glorified and helped by this consecration of æsthetic effort to the interior or collective work which she is pursuing. She recognises it, and she testifies her gratitude to the artist by declaring him a son of election, the son who remains at home, devoted to his mother, instead of going, legitimately, but with less of tender feeling for her, to seek a way of life which she can only share at a distance.

In return the Church gives to this son what none of the masters to whom he might attach himself outside her can give him to the same degree. A doctrine which establishes the human soul in such sublime certitudes, which gives our life so sublime a direction, which puts us on a level with the Infinite by causing us to rise and It to descend; which endeavours to make a God of man and shows us God in man in the person of Christ; which gives an interpretation of life so wide, so consoling, so helpful to the wretched, so alluring to endeavour, so strengthening to good but feeble wills, so welcoming to the repentance that knows no pride; could such a doctrine fail to inflame an imagination which dreams of it, to swell a voice which seeks to express its greatness, and to direct a hand which can fix in material images the harmonious emotions which contact with the beautiful has produced in the soul?

Lastly, for the interest of its work, its richness and variety, can we compare laicism—whose treasures we retain—with the themes proposed by Christian art?

Christ, Our Lady, the Saints, the epic of our origin, the heroic story of the martyrs, the sublime passions wherewith the supernatural illumines human existence, transfiguring ugliness itself by some reflection of its own beauty; the past, present, future story of religion in the world, the divine Beyond and its superhuman suggestions; is not all this, compared with profane art, were it in no wise profaned, a field overwhelming in its superiority? Might we not say rather

that it is a complete treasure, and that all the rest is only a part of the territory explored by this all-embracing vision, only a ray of this light of life?

Ah! If our Christian art has grown weak, it is not by reason of the subjects it proposes, or the inspirations it offers. The fault is ours, who do not offer art the environment it needs; an environment of faith, in which may resound the voices of Christianity whose vibrant echo it is; the whisper from on high of which it is the Æolian harp.

We observe that a renewal is being attempted amidst our wretchedness and inertia. That it may increase and succeed is the Church's ardent prayer.

None the less do we maintain that in this field, so closely connected with her own aims, the Church affords a welcome to all. Christian artists, and artists pure and simple, have her approbation in divers degrees, on the sole condition, so often repeated, that they respect what is her own work and the higher end of mankind.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL LIFE

MATERIAL civilisation, intellectual culture, science, art and all the other goods of human life are included in the whole called society, confined within its framework, or rather drawn into its current, for every society is a kind of river which flows unceasingly, and consequently, at least as far as concerns the possibility of making full use of them, all these things are in dependence on what it is to-day agreed to call the *social question.*

We cannot avoid asking what attitude the Church takes up in regard to this question. To define it is already to outline the reply. The social question is the search for conditions which will allow us to rise to better forms of collective life, to ensure a more equitable and abundant distribution of the good things of humanity. If it be a question of rising, the Church is bound to be concerned with it. In a search for better forms of life, such a specialist as she is in the higher life cannot be withdrawn from it. If equity and fraternity be supremely interested in it, the brotherhood which Catholicity represents in God and in Christ cannot hold aloof from it, if it operate in accordance with its law, nor can its representatives do so if they really represent it.

We have said of civilisation that the Church wills it. But can we speak of civilisation in the full sense while in offensive and unnatural inequalities, in invincible oppressions and undeserved sufferings, that abnormal state goes on to-day which has gone on so long in every human society?

Civilisation is the life of the human tree producing all its fruits, finding ways by which the sap may pass to the animated tips of its branches, swelling up in its buds to make them open out into fruit or flowers according to their nature. But would not a tree composed in great part of dead or dying branches be better called a bundle of firewood? And is not a society composed for the greater part of members without life, that is, members which do not share sufficiently in the natural and social advantages, so imperfect an assemblage that in the proper use of terms we should be obliged to refuse to call it civilised?

We shall be civilised when we have succeeded in making all the children of our national families live, and not merely vegetate; when there are no other miseries than those which are wilfully caused or are the result of inevitable accident.

We are far from such a state of things as that! And while waiting for that future, which, as a whole, is a dream, that inspired dreamer, the Catholic Church, the daughter of

the eternal Dream which has set all things in motion, the continuation of Christ, the divine Dreamer, must toss anxiously on her bed in this world, and when rising each day for renewed action, urge men to social reform.

Our Church is founded on the unity of men in God, thanks to their solidarity in Christ. Love, then, which is complete brotherhood, complete in breadth and complete, if possible, in depth, is its first rule. If this brotherhood were obeyed, justice would result as a minimum; justice from man to man, from individuals to groups, from groups, in return, to individuals, and this justice, since it would be the justice of a family instead of sharing in the commercial spirit of the partisan in the struggle for life, would never feel that it had done all that was expected of it. The more men act in a spirit of brotherhood, the more they are brothers. The more they pay, when love is in question, the less do they discharge their debt. Here occurs the *real* exchange of voluntary good will, of law for grace. *Owe no man anything,* says St. Paul, *but to love one another.*

It is not then possible to deny that the Church, by her very nature, must of right be greatly concerned with the social question. She is indeed insulted by being represented as a kind of wheedler at the service of the satisfied classes which they would use to show pity towards the masses, in order to dispense themselves from showing justice; but we do not accept the insult.

Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven is our daily prayer. To do without love by making calculations is the practice of the so-called positive sociologist who in his lofty and useless science forgets the A B C of human relations. To perform works of love without calculation, that is, without taking count of the bounds, the relations and the proper hierarchy of things, is the tendency of many others. The Church avoids both these excesses, and that, doubtless, is why she seems furiously reactionary to the partisans of anarchy tempered by sentimental songs; and wilfully revolutionary to the partisans of "order," that is to the division of mankind into castes under the sanction of a regulative whip. But to all these St. Thomas Aquinas replies: *The holy Apostolic Church advances with measured pace, keeping to the middle of the path between the two hedges of contrary error.*[1]

Why speak of extremes equally illusory, equally destructive? Better to keep to the fundamentals of things; there alone is wisdom, there for us is the explanation of the various aspects, the various moments of an agelong attitude which has lent itself to being judged in a thousand fashions, because it indeed affords occasion to contradictory semblances.

[1] *Summa contra Gentiles.*

The fundamental thing here is that the Church, in social matters as in everything else, being the Wisdom of God through the Spirit who dwells in it, goes straight to what is essential. She sacrifices nothing of it, but precisely in order to sacrifice nothing, she subordinates. To subordinate what, though precious, is less important, and to place it under what is the principal thing, that is in its proper place, is to keep it safe, instead of exalting it at the cost of a fatal disaster to itself and everything else.

And what is the essential in this matter? It is marked out by this undying exhortation : *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all the rest shall be added unto you.* Still, where are we to find the Kingdom of God? Everywhere, since *all is for the elect;* since the *Kingdom of Heaven* of the Gospel has been seen to include everything; nature, mankind, history.

But this Kingdom of God which is everywhere is not everywhere to the same degree. It exists in the first place in that which is of the highest value, that which is of value in the end, that which endures. Let us hear the rest : *The Kingdom of God is within you,* said the Lord. *The body is more than raiment, and the life than meat. What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Men of little faith, why are you troubled? Seek not the bread which perishes, but the bread which remains unto eternal life.*

The individual is mortal. Temporal society passes; does not the very word *temporal* mean expectant of death? If society, though it passes, has any importance, it is because it is the servant of what does not pass; because it is indispensable for the development in value, in happiness anticipated and in happiness to be achieved one day, of the individual man, the image of God, the son of God, the contemporary of God in an endless future. This is the essential, then. It is of this first of all and especially that an institution whose work is in the eternal, such as the Catholic Church, thinks and must think. I say an institution whose work is in the eternal, not to exclude time, since time is included in eternity; but to exclude partiality in the interest of time, and that reversal of values, the defect of secularising teachings, in accordance with which the partial should absorb the complete, life death, the nothingness that all flesh is, the full-grown existence that endures.

We are going to say that by considering this point of view alone, the Church works more efficaciously for social progress than the sociologists and their learned cabal. But for the moment it is enough to say that the Church desires before all things our salvation, *our* salvation, in this world and the other.

If social forms show themselves to be imperfect—they will always be more or less so—the Church teaches us to make use of them, to correct their insufficiency by use; to bring our good will into play, so that our virtues may act as a remedy for their vices.

We know that the Church's wisdom led her to act thus in regard to the most frightful social inferiority which she ever encountered—slavery. *Brother,* wrote St. Paul from his prison to the Christian Philemon, a slave-owner like his peers in Roman civilisation, to whom belonged the recently converted Onesimus—*brother, I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bands . . . whom I have sent back to thee. And do thou receive him as my own bowels. . . . For perhaps he therefore departed from thee for a season that thou mightest receive him again for ever, not now as a servant, but . . . a most dear brother, especially to me. If therefore thou count me as a partner, receive him as myself. And if he hath wronged thee in any thing or is in thy debt, put that to my account. I Paul have written it with my own hand: I will repay it.*

If Philemon listened to this exhortation, the situation of Onesimus in his house must have been strangely modified, and very far from the image that the word *slavery* evokes in our minds.

What matters slavery when it permits of brotherhood? A wife and husband who love each other laugh at the idea of claims and rights. The workman and employer who understand each other have no need of trade unions. But harmony will of itself create institutions useful for its growth and fruition. Meanwhile, it takes their place; it effects actual happiness instead of the happiness of sociological formulas. It is to this that the Church's moral action is purposely devoted.

Her conception is that there is as it were a double plan of human life. There is an individual plan, in accordance with which each destiny begins, continues and is perfected in the space of a few years. There is a social plan, which has the ages before it.

In the eyes of the Church, the most urgent thing is not the changing of the human race. She ardently desires it, but with that patient ardour of her God, who launches the universe on a sea of immeasurable destinies for which millions of ages will not suffice. What the Church desires in the first place is to make us individuals reach perfection; reach it here, by means of fraternal peace, the repose of a good conscience, a little happiness if God so wills—or if He does not so will, then patience, *which is not deceived in the end;* to reach it on high, by obtaining a place in the definitive City, where God will be *our* God, our joy and our good.

It follows that in spite of her tendency to the future—a tendency which the Church cannot renounce, because she gathers together all ages in her wide-spreading arms, because she claims to survive all things which claim a future for themselves—in spite of this never-weary tendency, the Church applies herself especially to the present; she is eminently practical, *objective,* as the Germans say, opportunist in the greater sense of the word, that is, she asks each social situation and stage of development not so much to modify itself, though that will one day become necessary, as to bear its full fruits; not so much to think for to-morrow as to save the present moment, since she is persuaded that there is no system so imperfect that good will may not render it fruitful in virtue and happiness, and also direct it towards a better system; no so-called ideal city which our vices cannot make a hell, and so draw on to reaction.

As, then, politically, the Church tolerates all systems, demanding not new constitutions, but wise application of those that exist, so, economically and socially, she demands less the improvement of the frame than proper care of the picture.

Virtue, wisdom, good understanding, brotherhood, these are the things she declares of first importance. She preaches them to-day, to-morrow, always. And from age to age, as the spiral mounts and the bounds of possibility are widened, she demands still the same thing, but also more; she maintains progress, makes each advance support the next like mountain strata, and ascends, without leaving the heart of the earth, to scan the far-off horizon.

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It seems presumptuous to say that the Church alone possesses what is needed not indeed exclusively to promote, but to ensure the success of a real social life.

But it is the unadulterated truth. If we express it under another form, and put it forward by degrees, we shall win to this truth many minds which withstand it at first sight.

There are undoubtedly few well-informed men with any regard for their intellectual reputation who would refuse to subscribe to the following equation: Christianity, from the social point of view, equals civilisation; paganism, Buddhism, Islam . . . and *atheism* equal retrogression, disregard of the conditions of life, sacrifice of the individual to oppressive associations, or, conversely, of associations to exaggerated individualities.

Now if, historically—the greatest men have recognised it as far as the past is concerned, though claiming, some of them, that it will be otherwise in the future, a claim that makes a hypothesis—if, I repeat, historically, Christianity has revealed itself as the true educative agent of humanity

in social matters, it is enough, to get back to our proposition, to add what we have so often said already: The Church is the true representative of Christianity, the only one that is complete, faithful at every point, fundamentally equipped, and especially so from the social point of view.

Yet the Church does not possess what would seem to some the *sine qua non* of social successes. She has no economic system. The Church does not believe very much in systems; she has greater confidence in life. And though she entirely believed in one, it would not be her business. The Church has a religious, not a scientific revelation. She leaves the world *given up to the disputes of men.* All concerns her, as we have said; but all concerns her in so far as she means to exercise an influence on everything, not that she wishes to include everything, to render our competence useless and to take our responsibilities on herself.

If in the course of the ages she has been led more than once to undertake social action, it was in order to be of use, it was not to carry out her proper mission. In the long run the Church keeps to the Saviour's attitude when two young men came to Him from the midst of the crowd and one of them said, *Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. Man,* replied Jesus, *who made Me a judge or a divider over you?* But as wishing to mark that His detachment from the divider's office and from direct intervention was only the clearing of the path for moral action, He added: *Take heed that ye beware of covetousness.*

Moral action, then, in the name of Jesus, is His Church's means of action. But this means plays the same part in collective life as *morale* plays in war.

What is the use of the quick-firing gun, the ·75 and its pneumatic control, the machine-gun and the military aeroplane, if the soldier is afraid, if he is a traitor, if he is an anti-militarist? What, too, is the use of the best economic system, if the agency which ought to apply it does not apply it; if the man who ought to be adapted to it is not adapted to it; if the man fails the thing, if the man and the thing fail the plan?

There are so many ways of failing that the Church's action will not be idle.

Firstly there is Utopianism, that mistress of pulling down on the pretext of magnificent upbuilding. Remember what the French Revolution did. With its humanitarian dreams, and its anxiety for indispensable reforms, it urged men to extremities through not being able to distinguish from Utopian dreams such actual and really useful progress as the actual world would stand. It threw to the ground ancient institutions, and in their place raised a post bearing a placard

with the plan of a building which would never be erected in fact because it could not be built. In the meantime people had to live in ruins.

The Church does not like ruins, and that is why she does not like Utopia. She follows up facts step by step, looking for the footprints of her God, whose providence is seen in facts; she sets men's feet firmly upon them, that they may walk with assurance towards the true ideal.

Secondly, there is error, the pursuit of which creates many enemies for the Church, but makes true progress her friend, since error, more often even than Utopianism, is inclined of its nature to beget unhappiness. Errors concerning the constitution of the family, the continuity of the race, the natural unity of nations, the relations of authority and liberty, justice in its relations with natural and supernatural brotherhood, property, hated by some, and pushed to an absolute extent, and consequently an inhuman one, by others; the equality or inequality of human beings with regard to their temporal destinies, etc. . . . the list of possible deviations is a long one; of certain deviations, we may say, for everything that is possible is exhausted, as far as concerns aberrations, by our human nature, which resembles always more or less the drunken peasant on horseback of whom Luther spoke; pick him up on one side, he said, and he falls off on the other.

The Church, resisting these with an energy as invincible as it is calm, renders a service which is a sad one for herself, for it exposes her to contradictions and to fury that would break all patience other than hers. But the reward of this service is equal to that of the whole natural and divine order which it defends, remembering that the growth of beings, be they persons or social bodies, can only take place in conformity with their laws, and that He who was the Master of life has said: *Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up.*

There is another moral office assumed by the Church, the opposition she offers to disorder, to violence, which mark time and produce nothing; to vice and self-seeking, which consume in no time what has been produced by the feverish effort and the long toil of generations.

When the flesh, even civilised flesh, overcomes the spirit, corrupt nature, grace, barbarism, gilded or not, is not far off; the thirst for enjoyment casts people back to poverty in the midst of their riches, to bitterness amidst all the means of happiness. They become antagonists through envy when no longer driven by need. The wild-beast struggle begins again, and as in a shipwreck men kill one another for a plank, so here they fight for that prosperity which secures the pleasure we madly confound with happiness.

We know well enough that the thirst for possession is as cruel as the will to live. Pleasure is more pitiless than hunger. And it is all the more terrible in its demands that they are not measured by need, but in the hallucination to which they give rise, put on a sort of infinity which drags society as well as individuals towards the gulf.

Lastly there is the Church's task of conquering the inertia which fetters those who are satisfied; which prevents those who have succeeded in attaining or were born on the summit from offering the ladder to others. Conservative sophistries are no more congenial to the Church than revolutionary theses. To be resigned on one's own behalf is not always a virtue, but to be resigned on behalf of others is a love of peace all too easy. Peace! we say; yes, but not the peace of the cemetery. The peace of the dead is the lesson of the living; they rest after having acted; we must act if we are to have the right to rest. That is what the Church means by the law of work, by the encouragement she gives to co-operation in work. Works of charity which heal sorrows, but especially social works which create strength; of these she reminds those who sleep after their meal at half-way house.

Opposed to the howling Socialists, who speak only of the robberies of employers, of capitalist ferocity, of the *ticket of ignominy*—one would hardly think they meant the workman's time-book!—she is opposed also, to such an extent does her mission compel her to turn her back on all extremes—to those who try to console the poor worker by saying to him curtly: Economise! or who say again: The situation of the lower classes is ameliorated—which is quite true, but like the situation of the sick man who has been allowed a corner of the hearth—or again: There are sufferings everywhere: money does not bring happiness; the workers of former times were perhaps happier with their limited desires than those of to-day with their immense hopes: things with which we have just agreed, but which prove nothing when there is a duty to be fulfilled.

Those who, without rendering any service, are content with preaching virtue to the multitudes, must expect the Church, which is attentive both to the multitudes and to themselves, to preach virtue to them. And in this connection virtue means brotherly help, the just appreciation of suffering or of right, the virtuous attempt to secure an organisation which surpasses in extent their little daily charities and brings to an end, as far as is possible and wise, those "unmerited sufferings" which Leo XIII. denounced before the world.

And if the Church condemns the passive selfishness which

denies the problem, and is slothful in solving it, so much the more does she condemn the aggressive selfishness which expresses itself in positive injustice, refusing due wages, oppressing the weak by excessive labour, badly regulated and badly adapted to the conditions of material or moral hygiene, giving itself up to usury in its various forms, under the cover of that word which serves to-day as the shelter of so many wares : *Business.*

By this moral action, which is her higher speciality, the Church claims without doubt to obtain salvation in the present, to turn situations to account and to save souls—we have said that that is her first concern; but equally she means to prepare the way for a more equitable régime. When it has been obtained, she will, in approving it, impose on it its duties, as she has done with this, and while seeking *the Kingdom of God and His justice* in as far as she is concerned, on this plane exclusively, she will obtain in addition a new progress, and be ready to apply to that the same rule.

No one can compete with the Church in such a mode of action. She can make these higher means, the feelings of justice, brotherhood, fidelity to oneself and others, devotion, sobriety, patience, enter into their kingdom so far as the heart of man permits, and she does so. Psychologically, she puts in operation all the means which her long practice has revealed to her, which real science confirms, after the science of yesterday, given up to narrow rationalism, had laughed at them. Socially, she is that admirable organism whose soul we have studied, whose body remains to be studied, with its universal extension, its power of organisation, its colossal and supple framework, its wealth of functions, its profusion of specialities, capable of reaching, from the top to the bottom of the ladder of minds, of social situations, of souls, all the infinite elements of the social body, in order to galvanise them towards the good. Supernaturally, she has the sacramental sources of grace, prayer, the divine and fraternal presence which is the object of her worship, the solidarity of the living and the dead, and God, who has declared through His Christ that *Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of you.*

God with us, in us, in our societies as in our consciences, will be the source of the same effects : organisation, sanctification, progress. As the Holy Spirit, when He lives in our hearts, puts all things in their place there, and consecrates the good in them by urging it towards the better; so the same Spirit, which is the soul of the Church, living in the social body through its work, produces the organising, sanctifying, progressive effects which accompany social works.

Even after this we must not think that an earthly paradise will be set up; we believe in the *valley of tears.* We

leave the millenniums and golden ages to the dreamers; our paradise is elsewhere. But for all this, the world was made young in order to mature.

"God stirs in souls of twenty years old," cried Lacordaire. It is God, too, who stirs in societies which feel called to the work for renewal. The Church must be there too, the Church which is "the body of God."

If the Church were to disappear, it would be with the social progress that has been obtained thanks to the Gospel as with the corpse which vegetates still for some time and keeps its form after the departure of the soul; but decomposition would soon set in. We see signs of it which do not invite us to push further. And what would become of the ideal of human renewal, when humanity no longer possessed its principle of life!

CHAPTER X

POLITICS

THE social question, as we have so far examined it, has no direct bearing on the division of men into nations. It is a question of the situations, classes, and parts played by men in the production, exchange and distribution of goods; it is not a political question.

It remains, then, to examine the latter aspect of things, firstly as it concerns the interior life of a nation, secondly as between different nations. We will speak only of what is essential, and that is simple.

The fundamental character of Catholicism, considered from this point of view, is its universality. Catholicism claims to be the religion of mankind. If it is the religion of mankind, it is the religion of the Frenchman, the Englishman, the German, the Russian, the Italian, the Japanese, as soon as they have become conscious, inwardly, of the rightly interpreted call of the religious need, and, outwardly, of the divine reply.

Under these conditions, the Church, which is the organ of universal religion, the assembly of humanity united in God, can know no frontiers; she is international by right.

It follows that in the inner constitution of each state the Church is present with the national life without belonging to it. She acts on it strongly, but without giving herself up to its sentiments of exclusion; without letting herself be limited to particularist points of view. She breathes the national atmosphere, and it could not be said that her members remain uninfluenced by that atmosphere even in the religious sphere; there are no water-tight compartments in life. But fundamentally the source of life for the Catholic Englishman or the Catholic Frenchman, so far as they are Catholic, is not the English or French atmosphere in which they live, it is the ethereal fluid common to both; the truths and impulses, the lights and influences which make up the common life of Catholic souls.

It follows in the second place that the Church cannot obey entirely any government, which would in itself involve a contradiction, inasmuch as by obeying one she would disobey another; and more, she could not allow any of her members in a religious question to obey any government. She is her own government, which within the very frontiers of each nation rules in spiritual matters all religious men.

Each of us owes a double homage : each of us is a subject of the State and a subject of the Church; son of the nation,

and son of God, the Father of all and of Christ, the representative Man of all who are manifested in the Catholic organisation. It is in this sense that we must understand that the Church, a *perfect society,* can allow herself neither to be absorbed nor even judged. In the field of national affairs she is international; side by side with a government, she is free.

And more than this—and here arises the angry resistance of some—the Church claims that she has a spiritual mission to govern societies as well as individuals, governors as well as governed. Sovereigns, the presidents of republics, ministers, parliamentary representatives, generals, administrators, when they are Catholics, are, as such, that is in spiritual matters, her subjects not only as individuals, but also as rulers. And this is so because, since the religious point of view has reference to our last ends, it cannot be unconcerned with the life of societies; because the divine is concerned with all that is human, and humanity is social; because Christ, when He charged His Church to teach *nations,* did not mean to speak only of their constitutive atoms, of isolated individuals; but of nations themselves, of humanity as it is organised in families of every degree; families in the proper sense, friendships, professional unions, associations of every kind, and nations.

Here, as must be agreed, is a source of conflicts which the greatest of good will on both sides cannot succeed in warding off altogether, out of which passions, lay or religious, have made the plague of history, a mournful series of blunders, mutual reproaches and combats.

The Saviour, whose custom it was to greet His flock with the words *Peace be with you,* was thinking of this, when He said so sadly : *I am come into this world not to bring peace, but a sword.* And this painful declaration has been verified from Jesus' own inevitable opposition to the Sanhedrin down to our Kulturkampfs and separations of Church and State.

We do not propose to plunge into an examination of the causes which provoke these conflicts; it would be a long story, and it is not a question that concerns us here. What we have to say is that there could be no conflicts with real justification; that the so-called pretensions of the Church are not really pretensions, but services; that her autonomy makes no breach in that of the State, since two separate orders are concerned, and she recognises its relative sovereignty as much for the benefit of her adversary as for her own; and that in truth religion is a thing so precious, so fundamental, since it is concerned with the *One Thing Necessary,* that it soars above those difficulties which wisdom can always palliate, although we may not hope always to overcome them.

Nations pass: God and the soul remain. Politics, that little concern of time, cannot ask us to sacrifice the eternal to it. And when we speak of the eternal, it is not for us merely a question of what comes after life, but of the forever, in so far as our forever depends on the eternal truth, on the indefectible law of good, and the permanent conditions of these things.

Society is not a permanent condition of existence and happiness for man. What it procures is in itself only a transient thing. Order, well-being, peace, temporal progress are great goods; the Church does not despise them; she takes the risk of doing this all the less inasmuch as though these things are temporal in themselves, a good conscience eternises them by making them the material of moral progress. But it remains true that in itself time endures only for a time. The way of peoples, like the way of individuals, like the way of earth itself, is a way to death. The poor earth flutters like a moth around its sun; it goes faster or slower; but at last the moth will throw itself into the flame, or will freeze after seeing it extinguished, and our noises will be silent, and governments, amidst posthumous nothingness, will have time to meditate, as in the *Légende des Siècles,* on

The form the throne takes on within the tomb.

During this time religious humanity united to its Christ, and like Him having but passed through death, will be alive and happy. From *militant* it will have become *triumphant.* It will become so because it has followed its law, its own law, and not that of organisations which perish. Does not the path of the projectile depend on the place to which it is going? A parabola which comes back to earth, and a hyperbola which goes towards the Infinite, are not interchangeable.

Leave the Church to travel to its God across the realities of this world. Leave her to exhort, to help, to rebuke, to allure, and without being preoccupied with her rights, but caring only for her duties, to say to all, rulers and subjects: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice.* We know, since the Gospel cannot lie, that this first necessity cannot be opposed in reality to aught that is useful: that *all the rest shall be added unto you.*

And in truth, after making allowance for the accidents which are inevitable in connection with things so complex; for the abuses inevitable in a world of sin, on the part of the representatives of the one power or the other, the Church, which seems to some so insupportable in its demands, so monopolist, importunate and obstructive, is at bottom an indispensable ally, a providential succour, even in matters purely political. "Serve God first," as Joan of Arc said; and your republic will only be served the better. Submission

to the Church in what is her business guarantees all the rest, both legitimate liberty and the rightful prerogatives of power.

"There are some who claim," wrote St. Augustine,[1] "that Christian teaching is injurious to the State. . . . Let them show us, then, an army composed of soldiers such as Christian teaching intends them to be; let them show us governors of provinces, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, kings, judges, nay more, taxpayers and tax-collectors such as Christian teaching intends them to be . . . when they have done this, let them repeat the accusation if they like."

If the few pages at our command allowed, we might see in detail how the conditions of life which the Church imposes, though they take us much farther than the results that can be attained by politics, are yet inclusive of and favour in the highest possible degree the conditions of political life.

There are three kinds of facts, it may be said, of which the course of political life is made up; individual moral facts, because each man is worth to the society that which he is first of all worth to himself; facts of obedience, because the individual has to be subordinated by law to the needs of collective life; facts of authority, because national unity and the public good that is sought by this unity are represented, and must be defended and urged to progress by rulers.

No one can contest the Church's usefulness on all these heads.

To individuals she says: Respect yourselves, your bodies, souls, employments, as the temple of God; and she helps them to do so. To rulers she says: *The princes of the heathen rule over them: but among you not so; but let him that is chief be the servant of all,* and when the rulers obey her, she makes them peers of St. Louis or St. Henry of Germany, devoted to death for the greatness and prosperity of their peoples. Lastly to subjects who hearken to her voice she says: *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God, and all those that are are ordained of God: wherefore he who resists the power resists the ordinance of God.*

Life a divine trust, authority a public service, and obedience to lawful power as to God Himself: these are the three complementary notions which she inculcates in practice, and which form the Church's moral system in relation to public life. Such a conception is worth as much as that of a *social contract,* or the more recent *quasi-contract,* or the *solidarity* imagined as a dead fact which proves nothing, or even more certainly than the *struggle for life* tempered somehow or

[1] Ep. 38, *Ad Marcellinum,* cited by Leo XIII. in his encyclical, *Immortale Dei.*

other by convergent interests or by a vague *altruism* constantly resisted.

The supernatural as *motive* and the supernatural as *means* seem indeed to be the highest conditions of a political life which is really worthy of mankind. If this is true, the attitude of the Church, though apparently exacting, is simply that of a mother.

When God does not reign in the sovereign, the sovereign, whether man or majority, claims to be God. When God does not thus reign in the hearts of subjects, it is sinful and anarchical nature which takes His place. There is nothing which is by nature more adapted to society than man, wrote Augustine; there is nothing which is by corruption less so. The Church, by applying religious means to overcome corruption above and below, does therefore a political work which is more valuable than political combinations. Leaving the question of political forms alone out of deference to the State, she labours at the foundations and predisposes to better forms.

If we looked at the past, we should see what eminent and more than eminent services the Catholic Church has rendered; and to this all the great impartial historians have borne witness. A few excesses of power noted here or there, on the part of particular representatives, cannot make us forget that she has borne the modern world upon her knees. Modern political life is her daughter, in every respect in which it is superior to despotic régimes or to the unbridled licence of the ante-Christian past.

If this were the place so to do, we might add that more than any other régime, our modern democracy has need of the Church's action; for its value depends entirely on the value of each and of all, since everyone is sovereign, as everyone is subject to the law, everyone is social material.

Every thinker since Aristotle has repeated—and it was no doubt said before him—that the excesses of a democracy are more gravely destructive agencies than the crimes of any ruler or any aristocracy.

Democracy is a sea; the Universal Church should be the immense shore which holds its waters, sheds light on them from its beacons, keeps them in place in the bed prepared for them; the bed of nature, which the supernatural protects, as the heaven guards the earth from drought and drives away corruption from it by its winds.

CHAPTER XI

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

MUST not the Church's attitude towards international life follow from her Catholicity even more than her views on internal politics?

The Church by her spiritual action intends to unite humanity with God. Now humanity signifies multitude; but it equally signifies unity, and it signifies finally a complex constitution wherein the unity of the whole and the relative unity of the partial associations allows multiplicity to subsist whether among men or societies.

Religion has to take account of this complexity when it proposes to divinise man in the sense we have explained, and must neither rush to unity by breaking through the natural frontiers established by human action, nor shut itself up in those frontiers so as to forget the ideal of unity which is founded on the initial realities from which it takes its rise.

In the eyes of the Church, all men form one unity, by reason of their common relation of sonship to God, of their common destiny in God, of their unity in action, in their collective responsibility for evil, in the redemption through "Our" Saviour, as she calls Him. Grace is for all, and the first effect of grace is charity, that is, the unity of all men in God.

But in order to unite men, we do not begin by dividing them, by breaking up the societies which have been established by the normal work of life. We do not begin to build a house by smashing the stones.

We must expect, then, that the Church will on the one hand maintain the unity of the human race in the Lord; and on the other will, at each stage of civilisation and in every order, consecrate those morally constituted—or at any rate morally subsisting—societies whose frontiers are for the good of humanity like the cell-walls of a honeycomb, which support the scaffolding of the hive and prevent the honey from escaping.

In these simple words we may see the whole of the doctrine which we should have to lay bare if it were possible here to treat with any fulness the vast subject indicated by our heading—the Church and international life.

The destructive and proud illuminism of the "citizens of the universe" is not the position of the Church. She sees in it an intellectual deviation, seeing that the unity of the human race is effected by a series of steps, and not directly from the individual to the whole, as if a living being were made of a pile of atoms, rather than of atoms forming mole-

cules, which in their turn form elementary substances, mixed substances, tissues, organs, and finally the body.

Geographical and ethnographical differences, the historical contingencies which have created nations, are real things. To neglect them, and to pretend to unite the human race apart from space and time, without respect to space and time, is a flight of fancy readily taken for a stroke of genius, but its levity seems shocking to the Church.

It is all the more repugnant to her inasmuch as in this very internationalist sentiment the Church sees moral deviations which hardly tempt her to approve them. The renewal of the caste spirit, which seeks to substitute an international coalition of instincts for the love of children of a single fatherland; the spirit of the amateur and the dilettante, the so-called citizen of the world who is in reality only the citizen of his own garden, smoking-room or library; that cunning carefulness for peace at any price which makes promises to everyone so that it may have to pay no one, finding it convenient to associate those two things which cost nothing and produce a certain amount of glory, cosmopolitanism in word and very actual selfishness in deed; the Church has not much taste for these methods of evading one's duty. She proclaims that we owe love, honour and service to God in the first place, and after God not to humanity immediately, but to our father and mother, to our families, to our countries. After these, to humanity.

But if she says after these, it does not follow that this last of duties should be neglected, or above all denied. That is why the Church, after having bestowed her blessing on patriotism, or rather after having imposed it in the name of her moral system, turns on those who would say: This is enough.

It is not enough. Frontiers are sacred; but their purpose is not to form watertight partitions between us; it is to subserve human good; to furnish supports for our sentiments in order that they may advance in concentric circles from the inner to the further, without forgetting that in God the far-off is very near; it is to make a series of our duties in order to prevent their dispersal, their return to confusion and anarchy; not to make us forget any of them.

And have we not duties, individually and collectively, in regard to what we call foreign to us? For the Church, the foreign is simply a more distant neighbour, a brother sometimes uncongenial, possibly unjust, blameworthy in our eyes, perhaps, aggressive very often, even as in families we very often find brothers uncongenial, aggressive or blameworthy.

The ideal of international relations, as the Church sees it, would be exactly analogous to that which we can imagine as

a formula of relations between brothers ill-assorted by nature, of varying characters, divergent interest, consequently likely to quarrel; but who yet would have the desire to fulfil their duty, that is, to draw from their brotherhood its consequences, of which the minimum is justice.

The jurists of international law—apart from the theologians, whom on this point the future will never praise too highly—have not yet risen to the height of this conception. Beginning with Montesquieu, and ending with the most recent of them, all say : Nations are *sovereign.* And by this they mean that each is walled up by itself, that each, morally and juridically, depends only on itself; that it has no duties except such as it may be pleased to assume with an eye to its own advantage, and that it is always authorised to break the contract if it is considered too onerous, and to have recourse to force to settle questions believed to be vital to its interest or honour—that is in reality (and this is quite acknowledged) all those in which there is an interest greater than that of being faithful to one's engagements and of having regard for a profitable neighbour.

The root of all this is the boorish doctrine of the struggle for life, that is, the notion that every living being, animal, man or nation, has its own preservation as its only law of action, all that makes up its surroundings, precious or not in the eyes of reason, brotherly or not in regard to a despised religion or moral system, everything being only matter for assimilation for the sake of ensuring a happier or wider life.

This barbarous thesis, the outcome of a science gone astray, is the antithesis of the conceptions of the Church. The Church deplores the profound immorality which governs the relations of peoples. If she intervenes little in the matter, it is because she is disarmed in face of so much rancour and selfishness; her patient wisdom applies the rule which she makes on the subject of *brotherly correction;* do not warn or rebuke unless you hope for amendment; without that, you will only increase the evil. But disarmed or not, the Church is bound to proclaim the ideal, and she does so in this prayer the sublimity of which may be commended to those who think our Church reactionary : *O God, who hast given Thy children the earth for their cultivation, grant that they may have but one heart and one soul, even as they have but one dwelling-place.*

This moral unity of mankind is in no wise a chimera; it is the law. We hardly hope to see it obeyed under existing circumstances, because the obstacles are too numerous, and interests and passions are entangled in too complex a fashion. But all the same, it is the law. And at least we must know it, and agree to it, and strive after it, at the risk of repeated failure, as we do in other things.

Every Christian must be ready to subscribe the following propositions :

Firstly, there is no law of "right is might."

Secondly, international relations, like private relations, are governed by the moral law.

Thirdly, and consequently, each nation, while seeking its own interest and defending it by all honourable means, is interdicted from having recourse to violence, to fraud, to proceedings of intimidation, to the employment of traitors, of disloyal spies, and generally, to all which is an offence to morality as honest people understand it.

Fourthly, amongst all, from the strongest to the weakest, from the most to the least civilised, from the most to the least moral, there must reign, with due proportion, those relations which subsist in a family between the oldest and the youngest, the comer in and the goer out, the member that understands his duty and the member that neglects it.

Fifthly, in cases of dispute, knowing that to be judge and litigant are two incompatible rôles, an arbitrator must be sought.

If war breaks out in spite of all this, war imposed by the bad will of one of the peoples or by circumstances which do not allow of recourse to the ways of justice, military action must be directed only to the re-establishment of justice, including indemnities, instead of to unjustifiable conquest and Draconian demands, and instead of vengeance.

We are very far from this as yet! But yet this, in the clearest and most absolute fashion, is the teaching of the Church.

Dare we add that for her deepest thought, seeing that she is the bearer of the Gospel and reckons on the future for entire fulfilment, this is but a minimum?

Let us go so far, and invite those who do not fear to face wide horizons to understand that for the Church the future is not in the direction of an internationalism of crumbling anarchy, the misdeeds of which are all too evident; since brotherhood in God and in Christ have no juridical, political or social organ that touches the life of nations; since the Christianity of former times is dead, dislocated by ambition and unbelief, and nothing *secular* has taken its place.

The future, if it is to obey the Gospel, will afford a sanction to our unity in God and in Christ.

What will this sanction be? Who will risk foretelling? I am no propagandist of the *United States of Europe,* nor of universal confederations organised in Parliament by simpletons and visionaries. Every serious man believes that life alone can know the ways of life, and that particularly in respect of the immeasurable future every hypothesis is with-

out import and every prophecy ridiculous. But it is not prophesying to say that the religious unity of man must have—at this very moment—its moral consequences. The moral unity of men must have, one day, its juridical consequences, and therefore, since juridical power in the strict sense is an attribute of political power, the moral unity of men must one day have—under what form no one knows—its political consequences.

There is no question of getting rid of nations; but rather of binding them more closely, by limiting a sovereignty which claims to be absolute, whereas it is dependent, since the unity it represents is only a relative unity in relation to that human race which is *one* by nature and united in God.

Our Popes have attempted at different times to draw these consequences from the doctrines of Catholicism. They were bound to fail, because the Church, which by definition has at its disposal only a spiritual power and therefore no more political influence than may be conceded to it, could not resist the violence of separatist currents. But what the Church herself has not done and could not do, in a domain which was not hers, the future must do under the moral impulse of the Church.

If the human race cannot organise itself thoroughly, continuing the work which was begun in the days when isolated families made themselves into cities, cities into little provincial states, provinces into states endowed with a wide power of expansion—if the human race refuses thus to organise its real life and to begin on this henceforth definitive basis its real evolution on earth, we must say that it will have been unfaithful to itself, that it will have failed to recognise its fundamental unity; unfaithful to its God, who is the Father of all in common and who is only served when we come to Him as brethren; unfaithful to Christ, who, concentrating in Himself our one humanity and the one God, could say, sublime Dreamer as He was, at the moment when the sleep of death was close upon Him : *Father, may they all be one, as We are one.*

While waiting for what will be the last attempt of the leaven of the Gospel to leaven, as the Saviour said, *the whole lump,* the Church has as her duty the preaching of the immediate Gospel, the Gospel of moral relations, while waiting for juridical and political relations to become organised between the nations.

The politics of *each man for himself* need the corrective supplied by the proverb *God for us all,* and we must remember that God speaks in our consciences. God does justice through us; God realises His providence through us. *Each for him-*

self and God for all, in the Christian sense, means then : We peoples seek our own interest as at an election each candidate seeks to succeed, and to beat the others if he can; but justice must remain safe, together with fundamental fraternity, and the God of justice and of fraternity then works for the good of all, through our own action as through His.

How far we are, once more, from such relations as these ! Yet Christians must agree on them; for this is the condition, in the first place, of the good conscience of nations, and also it must be the sanction of that good which we are no longer on the watch against losing, but which everyone desires with the better part of himself; that which the Saviour, at the same supreme moment of which we spoke just now, desired to leave us as His heritage—Peace.

CHAPTER XII

PEACE

IF we make ever so cursory an acquaintance with history, and a superficial study of the complexity of its revelations, many semblances may conceal the real teaching and real action of the Church with regard to peace.

Religion favours the principle of authority; when it is militarism that is in possession of authority, religion might easily seem to be working on its behalf, and thereby to be friendly to war. Religion has strongly marked conservative tendencies; nothing appeals to it less than revolution, although it is indefinitely progressive; under bellicose governments, then, it must, to the contemporaries who are unable to consider it with a broad view, seem to be closely attached to bellicose politics.

But that would be to look at the narrowest aspect of things. What matters is the knowledge of what is the fundamental doctrine of the Church; whither, in the long run, the current of her action is directed. To both these questions the reply is very easy.

The Church is fraternity in God. Those who have any other conception of her ought to justify it, and if they endeavour, as some have done, to make her an apologist for war, it is on their personal responsibility.

To us it has seemed that the notion of the Church arises from this : God is the common Father of all men, calling the whole human community, united in Christ, to a common supernatural destiny; and to that end arranging it in an organised society of which the fundamental character is unity in universality, individuals and nations being united therein without in any wise losing their autonomy, but allowing themselves to be governed in spiritual matters by a spiritual authority; allowing themselves to be penetrated by that spirit of unity the effect of which in our hearts is called charity, and the external effect of which, if they remain faithful to it, will be *concord*.

As a matter of fact, war has no place in the Catholic plan. It is not with Catholicism as with the ancient religions, which were in favour of peace within the racial group, the narrow family of a people; but forsook it all the more in questions of external relations, under the plea of opposition to adverse institutions or rival gods.

The absolute elevation and all-embracing breadth of Catholic religious feeling allows no one who penetrates into it and is penetrated by it to fall into this zealous selfishness, this selfish and therefore quarrelsome zeal. If it be true, as

has been claimed, that religious fraternity created Greek history, of which the amphictyonies were a great factor, and also Roman history, and also, earlier, on the same Latin soil, Etruscan life—would not the universal brotherhood of Christians, far more than this narrow fraternity, were it but obedient to the voice of the Church, create a history of peace for the world?

We Catholics do not preach the struggle for life, but union for life, for the highest life. We do not believe that the world is given up to brute force, and that brute force, thanks to selection, is its method of progress. We believe that the most fundamental law of the world is love, since love is the concentration of forces. We believe that in the human kingdom this law, thanks to the intervention of reason and our higher feelings, takes on a greater breadth than it shows in nature, in which the reason and the love immanent in all things are not seconded by a considered consent. And if in addition grace comes to illumine the reason with a superior light, revealing to it the views of Providence, and if our feelings, soaked with this grace, strengthen the thread whereby our hearts are bound to each other, our teaching and our tendencies will be even further from what Lacordaire called a "doctrine of the slums."

No, our God is no Teutates, nor our Christ the hero of a military trilogy. On the Mount where the Law of the New Testament was given, it was said: *Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God.*

The liturgy takes up this theme, and after addressing God as the *author and lover of peace,* it cries out: *O God, from whom proceed holy desires, right counsels and just works, give to thy servants that peace which the world cannot give . . . that our times, by thy protection, may be peaceful.* If this prayer be analysed, it will be seen to contain true pacificism in its most perfect formula, the pacificism which wants peace not through cowardice or illuminism, but through the rectitude of desires, the wisdom of counsels and the justice of deeds.

Our saints, again, those witnesses of doctrine, whose lives are as it were the openings through which we may judge of the continuity of a current which would otherwise seem hidden, are in the most eminent degree men of peace.

That seems quite plain? Certainly; but only on the condition that the Church, as an institution, preaches peace, seeing that the saints, those men and women without pretension, had no pretension but to reflect exactly the social idea which is at the base of the Catholic organisation. If they are sons of a divided city, they bear themselves like St. Francis of Assisi, who reconciled the *majores* and *minores* in battle. Between town and town they do as did St. Catherine of Siena,

who traversed the whole of Italy crying: *Peace! Peace!* Between people and people they are as St. Bernard, who made himself a universal arbitrator, and would have no war except against the Oriental invader, who by threatening the countries of the Gospel threatened the future of civilisation.

The latest comer to our altars, that most sublime, most remarkable, valiant and gentle heroine, Joan of Arc, was no exception. This French Valkyrie, as some folk like to call her, made war only because she could not avoid war; because the avoidance of war would have been the consecration of injustice, the consecration of invasion, the death of what was nearest to her heart; her fatherland. Death for herself she could welcome; but death for France, no!

She addressed letter after letter to the Englishman in endeavouring to bring him to *do right to the King of Heaven,* as she said in her delightful way, that is, clearly, to realise justice. *She is ready to make peace,* said she of herself, *if you will do her right, so that you restore and pay to France what you have withheld.*

They replied to her advances by calling her cowherd and ribald. This lack of success wrested from her, says her almoner Pasquerel, *great plenty of tears.* The idea of shedding blood overwhelmed her. She dried her tears for battle, but she had made her act of Christian protestation, and she declared her motive of action on the day when she said, with that typical French vivacity which marked all her behaviour: *The peace that is wanted is that these English should go back to their country, to England.*

Yet we must understand that if the Church desires peace, if peace is her prayer, peace her ideal, it by no means follows that she desires peace at any price, peace before everything.

What the Church desires before everything is neither peace nor war; it is good. She adopts the definition of her great doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, who says after St. Augustine, in his luminous and measured style: *Peace is nothing else than the tranquillity of order.*

If order reigns, and all is safe among the goods for which we are responsible, then peace is right; whosoever disturbs it in the name of ambition, of avarice or pride need not hope to gain religion for his ally. But if order is disturbed by unjust provocation, by injuries to honour, or by obstacles to the interest of a legitimate national development which for the Christian represents the interest of Providence, then it is necessary to react. War is not in such a case execrable and cruel injustice; it is justice armed, like those figures of the frescoes of olden time, with sword raised, ready to strike gravely and mightily, when the scales of Equity have deter-

mined the right and shown the culprit with their imperturbable and slow finger.

None the less, war, though it be thus an act of justice as far as concerns the party that wages it for the sake of the good, is none the less, considered as a whole, a daughter of injustice, since the claiming of right by force presupposes a force which is opposed to that right. If injustice be suppressed just war is rendered useless, and unjust war impossible. And so the Church, without useless invective, consecrates her influence not to the search after pacificist systems, but to the attempt to secure that all have their due, and yield their due to others, make concessions in case of dispute, and do not have recourse to extreme methods except in extreme cases which would not occur if good will were present.

She is not content with this attempt; she goes further, and means to go deeper. For what we have just said, that peace is the daughter of justice, is not the whole truth, nor even the chief part of the truth. That justice which has peace for its daughter is itself the daughter of a mother who, in the Scriptures, bears the same name, but in a wider sense.

As in some countries the family name is doubled, being given on the one hand to the father and on the other to the son in place of the usual first name, so, in the language of Christianity, the *just* man is he who does justice to his neighbour; but also and particularly he who does justice to God, to himself, to things as well as persons, to the religious and moral virtues—moral, that is, in the individual sense—as well as to the social virtues.

Now let us consider if a man can be just in the first sense without being so in the second—if a man can do justice to his neighbour when he is avaricious, spiteful, jealous, careless of the divine, luxurious, full of pride, and so on.

The Church does not think so. She thinks with the psalm that *deep calleth unto deep* and that nations, no more than individuals, can be just to others if they are not just, that is moral, within. "A virtuous state is called to enjoy peace," said Aristotle of old (*Polit.* viii. 1). *Peace on earth to men of good will,* says the Gospel, with greater authority. *There is no peace for the wicked,* said the prophets by anticipation. *They know not the path of peace; there is no justice in their ways. They have gone in paths that lead astray. Whoso walks in them knows not peace* (Isa. xliii. 22; lix. 8). And alluding to the misguided pacificists who look for systems without attending to souls, another said: *They healed the breach of the daughter of my people disgracefully, saying: Peace! peace! when there was no peace* (Jer. viii. 11).

All these sayings ought to instruct us. In the actual state of human morality, there is no hope of durable peace, because

there is no hope of justice. Justice may be praised, but it waits in the cold; from individuals to societies the leprosy extends, and it is not the ointment of formulas, Parliamentary resolutions or declarations of Congress that will stop its ravages.

It is here that in doctrine and practice comes the principal rôle of the Church. What is the good of waiting to speak of the *truce of God,* of the great projects fostered by Popes for the organisation of the powers, and the consequent termination of quarrels! What matter the admonitions perpetually addressed to Christian princes from the epoch of Constantine to Pius X. and Benedict XV.? Diplomatic documents and encyclicals are not lacking. But the essential for the Church is her moral rôle, her action of sanctification, and, it may even be said, her very existence, seeing that she is the "Holy Church."

What the Church inculcates: what the Church does: what the Church is: these are the sources of true pacificism. What she is is the union of mankind in a worldwide society. What she does is a work of amelioration of human relations beginning from within, that is, beginning with the causes, instead of only touching the symptoms. What she inculcates is that summary of the Law and the Prophets, that mainspring of good, that central knot of all the ties in which peace is trapped—love.

Love drawn from its source; the feeling of brotherhood in God, the centre of the whole circle of being, without whom the sheaf has no band to hold it and the ears get scattered; love in the universal Man, the Son of Man, the real symbol of that unity which we make up, of that common foundation which we have to defend against the hardness of life, instead of rending it into bleeding fragments; the love which does not divide what is united—the Father to honour Him, the sons to be treated as brethren, time to pass through as helpful fellow-travellers, eternity to be attained in the unity of a happy family—that, whatever illusion may think of it, is the secret of peace among men.

All comes from the sources, and outside Love there are no sources. War is the daughter of sin, and it is the Lamb of God who takes away sin. *Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world,* cries the Liturgy insistently and repeatedly, *grant us, grant us, yea, do Thou grant us peace!*

O pacificists, if you have a means of sanctifying men, of making them moral and so of making moral institutions and nations, use it, for it is good. The Catholic has one; it is the living Gospel, Christ made real through an institution, acting socially, the Church. Keep to the Church of Christ. When you are within it and you enjoy its strength, you will lend it yours regulated and sanctified, cleansed of its

Utopianism, confirmed in its hope. But begin at the beginning. Recognise that here is the source of peace, because here is the source of justice and of love, here the bridle of those vices which fight against justice and love, here effective help, warm feelings, kindly fatherhood and brotherhood, forces of recovery beside counsels of innocence, stimulants which in their action unite the energies of earth and heaven, and which neglect neither the resources of the most scientific psychology, nor those of that mysticism which is the sense of the divine in us.

Peace I leave you, My peace I give to you, said the Saviour, *not as the world giveth.* The world, unless it passes out into the divine, has no means of establishing peace in itself. Peace descends from on high, it does not rise from below.

When the dawn appears to rise, and seems to emerge from the ground, it is our earth that bends down, after its night-long prostration, at the feet of the god of light, and, like Esther before the Eastern satrap, feels the touch of his golden sceptre.

BOOK V

THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE DIVINE ORDER OF THE CHURCH

NOW that we have studied the Church's *raison d'être,* and its *raison d'être* has enabled us to understand its essence, from which arise its character and the various forms which its relations assume, we come, without the hope of going very far into the matter, to the question of its organisation. We have to see the expansion of that unity which is the fundamental note of the Church.

The fact that the Church is one does not prove that it is uniform. As soon as unity is no longer nullity, as soon as it becomes enriched and in the measure that it does so, it calls for a multiplicity of functions which themselves demand an ordered arrangement, without which unity, pretending to become richer, will be destroyed, and will involve in its own destruction the very being which it made to consist.

Now this is what is meant by organisation. Organisation is the unity of what is manifold. Our body is manifold; but it is only one. By means of the anatomical connections of the organs, the physiological solidarity of its functions, it realises what scientists call a *symbiosis,* that is a common life governed by certain laws, a differentiation which is concentrated, a concentration which is differentiated; that is what we mean when we say that a body is *organised.*

Our Church, which is a spiritual body, cannot escape this condition. Beginning from its birth, as fast as it grows, it must unfold the riches of its life, while continuing more and more to concentrate them, as we saw when we spoke of the unity of the Church. This twofold reciprocal effort constitutes its organisation.

But if we turn our eyes from the individual living being to nature as a whole, we shall find that it too is organised. All science, all philosophy, and even poetry are only the ecstatic contemplation of this organisation. If the body of a tiny midge which is born and dies within the space of a few hours is a wonderful thing, we must agree that the great cosmos, of which the phenomena of life are only a manifestation, is no less rich in immanent wisdom. The ancients liked to imagine it as a living being of colossal dimensions, endowed

with functions that were the phenomena of nature, governed by a universal soul whereof our soul was a reflection, and which by some of them was confounded with God.

We no longer think thus, thanks to the Gospel and to science; but what made men think thus still remains. Nature is organised. From that *province of nature* to which we are confined we gather only a very small part of its organisation; but we infer the rest. But have we not said that in a certain fashion nature forms part of the Church? And if this be true, must we not say that the Church, which is organised in this inferior part of her, must be much more so in general?

But once more, if the Church is organised in that continuation of her that is called nature, much more and much better must she be so in her principal manifestation, which is mankind joined with God, as far as concerns the supernatural destinies of the race.

Mankind is organised in temporal things as far as possible. The effort of the ages tends towards this organisation with an order that is only manifest when it is broadly considered, but which is none the less easy to discover. Mankind knows that it is organic by right. Descended, as it is, from a single pair; responding to a creative idea which unfolds in races and in families of nations, but which keeps its fundamental unity and issues towards the same destinies, it experiences this obligation in the form of the need of forming partnerships, for the better exploitation of life, between individual and individual, family and family, city and city, and in a limited measure, but one which will, we hope, extend, between nation and nation.

If this has not been done and carried out fully; if, from Adam to ourselves, there have not been formed, by means of more and more complex alliances, a succession of syntheses which might by progressing without rupture arrive at an organisation of humanity, the fault has been not in nature's call, but with sin, which has walled us up in selfishness and destroyed the bonds between us; with the dulness of mind that has prevented us from looking down from above or diving into the depths to discover the humanity within us, with historical occurrences, chances, material obstacles such as distances, cosmic revolutions, and so on.

But in the matter of the supernatural these causes of division do not obtain, or in any case are so weakened that their action is only accessory. The dull-mindedness is overcome by Revelation and by that permanent assistance which Christ promised to His own. Sin is only too active, and produces schisms, divisions, which are the effects of partial organisation. But sin is kept within bounds by the interior grace of the Church and by a providence which that grace fulfils.

External chances and material obstacles, which weigh so

heavily on temporal organisation, are no longer of great importance in the matter of entirely moral relations. A missionary Bishop who wanders by the Congo or the Yellow River takes with him thither the whole of the Church; he takes but a little of his country, and certainly the Chinese or the Negro understand him much better when he says, to explain himself in a few words: I represent the Church, than if he were to say: I represent humanity.

The new Adam, Christ, was able, then, to lay the foundations of a religious organisation which, to become a "perfect society," that is a complete society, would not have to wait on the slow progress of political or economic organisation.

Not that time refused its collaboration in the work. Time is present everywhere, even when God is at work, since it is in relation to man that He acts, and if we ourselves had a little more of this devouring time before us, it would be most interesting to trace the historical evolution of all the organs of the human-divine body. But what we are saying is that time, though necessary everywhere, was less so here than elsewhere. A few well-used centuries would be enough for this colossal growth, and the first day of the Church's life already showed that its essential had been obtained, thanks to the Spirit who hovered over her as over the primordial creation, without having the same resistances to count on, knowing that He had obtained better co-operation.

This Spirit of organisation rested first of all on Christ. It produced in Him individual effects the harmony of which will be part of the contemplation of eternity. But these individual effects were only individual as far as concerned their location; their intention was already social, and they called for the display of a social organisation which had to be universal.

Shall we ever weary of calling our Christ the Son of Man, the Universal Man, the Man who draws mankind and the nature that is conjoined with mankind towards the Godhead with which He himself is joined?

It was to fulfil these rôles that He was made *sin,* as St. Paul says, because humanity was sin; that He was made *sorrow,* because humanity was sorrowful; that He was made *expiatory virtue,* in order that our expiations might acquire a value through His; that lastly He was made *glory,* drawing to heaven living humanity in the person of that One of its members who was given to it for Head; the glorified Head which the members will follow, when the collective giant has ended his painful journey.

In Christ, says St. Paul, all things are made one and consist: *omnia in ipso constant* (Collos. i. 16-18); and so much the more all men.

If humanity, then, is organic in itself, it must be organic in Christ, that is to say it must be so to the extent that it is by Him constituted into a Church, that it becomes in a spiritual sense His own Body, the Body whereof the Holy Ghost, communicated through the Incarnation, becomes in some sort the common soul.

We will go farther still. We will say: The Church, a human-divine body through Christ, which includes God within itself, must form part of that divine organisation which makes the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost the model of all life, the supreme Order, the ideal case—although transcending ideality—of unity in organic multiplicity.

In God, also, there is vital richness in the full unity of life, and the divine relations, Fatherhood, Sonship, the mutual bond of Love; power, wisdom, goodness; source, law, end; these make up a hierarchy, an organisation whose reflection is found in all things, seeing that everywhere and in all things we have to do with nothing else than creation, government and use; of furnishing an initiative, which is an act of power; of ruling it, which is an act of wisdom; and of directing it towards a chosen end, which is an act of love.

But the divine order must be reflected first of all in the Church, because, firstly, she is the emanation most akin to it; since Christ, who as the Word is part of the divine order, directly founded the Church; but, above all, because such a foundation is not the act of an architect who builds and disappears. Christ remains conjoined with us; his Spirit lives in us socially, and it is He who organises us. The Father is given to us for a father by Him who has adopted us as His brethren by virtue of His divine solidarity.

This Church, which is wholly in Christ, inasmuch as it is His Body, the Man Christ, who is also God, the Son of God, introduces into the Trinity.

The Father sends His Son, who sends His apostles, who go to the faithful, and the faithful, in giving themselves to the apostles, give themselves to the Son, and return through Him to the Father, in the unity of the Spirit communicated by the Son.

Did not Jesus, in His sacerdotal prayer, say: *Father, that they may be one, as Thou and I are one,* that is in an organic unity?

The glory which Thou hast given Me, He went on, *I have given them.* And to His Apostles: *As My Father has sent Me, so I send you* (John xx. 21). *He that receiveth you receiveth Me: and He that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me* (Matt. x. 40).

And the Apostles, in their turn, said: *We announce to you that which we have seen and heard, that you also may have*

fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, that you may have joy, and that your joy may be full (1 John i. 3-4). No mention is made in this text of the Holy Ghost; but He is understood, and we find His effect, the fulness of joy.

This intermingling of the divine order with the human-divine social body led St. Cyprian to define the Church as "a redeemed people, assembled in the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost": *De unitate Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti plebs adunata* (De Orat. Dom., No. 23). And carrying his boldness still further, he dared to call the Church "the Unity of God," to signify that the divine embrace which harmoniously unites the Three Persons passes through the Son as it were under the Church, to maintain it in God the Three in One, as in those old pictures where God the Father, in the light of the Spirit, folds in His arms and in His garment the Church united to His Son Incarnate and crucified.

It follows naturally that the order of the Church is only an extension of the eternal divine order, and that no other organisation could pretend to so rich a simplicity, so complete a simplicity as hers.

Her outlines, however, will be deficient, if not her centre, and she will allow of a certain relativity, because a human-divine society, if it is perfect in so far as it is divine, and perfect moreover at the point where the curve touches the infinite, yet so far as it is human, and as the finite curve recedes from the infinite tangent, it becomes frail, subject to human accidents, to chance, to historical contingencies.

If we push our study of the religious organisation a little farther, instead of keeping, as we have been doing, to the main lines, we shall see in it variabilities and failings which disclose its human element, which is never perfectly submitted to the divine that acts as its soul.

Our soul, also, organises our body as best it can; in the most favourable circumstances it only succeeds in bringing its matter into subjection for general purposes. God is not thus powerless in humanity; but He makes Himself powerless out of respect for man. He leaves us our responsibility. He lets rule the general laws of life which He has ordained. Yet He is none the less there to give the whole its direction, and this, unless by a permanent miracle foreign to the broad views of providence, can only be done by an organism working on the lines expected of it.

The Papacy and the Episcopate represent this organism. We shall see their various developments. In studying these institutions, we may get an idea of the high wisdom that informs them; of the deep unity that guides them. "Let us be many," said Albert the Great of our debaters; "but let

our cause be one." Let us be many also in the Church; many playing various parts, assuming various responsibilities; but let the common cause be served. It will be, seeing Who rules over it and gathers it into one.

When the Queen of Saba came to the court of Solomon, the wise and subtle order of the Eastern array took her breath away for wonder—*non habebat ultra spiritum;* and much more must the assembly of the Gentiles of all times marvel at the wisdom of the divine Solomon in the administration of His Kingdom.

And the Church is not unworthy of such admiration.

She is all the more worthy of it, and God shows Himself so much the more worthy of it in her, since the work of sanctification is above all a work of mercy.[1] It raises up us who were fallen; it sustains us, who waver every moment; it makes us who oppose it go forward; it uplifts us who are weighed down; it heals the wounds that we incur in the ceaseless battle of moral life, and administers to us enduring draughts of refreshment on the march.

The Church is an enterprise of salvation, a thing more difficult and delicate, and yet more necessary than a work of pure justice. Her functioning must reflect this purpose of hers, and this will explain certain rigidities and complexities which surprise us.

Religious humanity, like a vessel in a storm, needs a crew always ready, a sure pilot, a firm discipline, an energetic and active goodness, duties properly distributed and properly supervised, and all hands on deck and the steersman's eyes on the stars.

Only on these conditions can the passage be made.

And must not this fearful and everlasting passage of ours be made at all costs?

[1] *Per viscera misericordiæ visitavit nos* (Luke i. 78).

CHAPTER II

THE MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

THE Church's organisation has the Trinity for its source. Through the Son, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost enfold in Their noble familiarity and cause to take part in Their ineffable relations all who are called to reap the benefit of the Incarnation, that is to say all consentient mankind, and nature linked together with mankind.

The head of this all is Christ, and whatever makes but a single body with Him enters with Him into the divine hierarchy of the Trinity.

From this source, high and far removed from everyday reality as it may perhaps seem, are derived in the Church all everyday realities, and if we fail to understand the proceedings of our chiefs, the fault is often with an initial blunder, since the regions in which the action of religion is elaborated are not even suspected by the critic. Moreover, starting from thence, it does not refuse to descend step by step to the humblest realities of life; but the summits have to be explored.

At this stage we must elucidate in the light of the above-mentioned general principle a very important question relating to religious government. Is the Church a monarchy? Is it more or less of a democracy? Does authority come from below, and are the chiefs only representatives, mandatories? At the very least, is there room for the authority to be controlled, divided, limited, as it is in most human governments? Or does power in the Church come on the contrary from above, so that the faithful are simply subjects, and their immediate authority only an emanation of a supreme authority?

This question has given rise to dangerous mistakes on the part of those who are not members of the Church, and even on the part of many of the ill-instructed faithful. It is at the bottom of the Protestant dispute; it is a part of the Modernist dispute, and it is the key to many special questions in which good Catholics, even if constitutionalists, get into a muddle.

The solution is to be sought in the hidden mysteries whence everything arises.

The Church is humano-divine. God is included in her being and her functioning through the Son of God made Man; through the Spirit of God which He communicates to us; through the Father, whom He makes *our* Father by reason of His Fraternal solidarity with us.

If God is included in the Church, it goes without saying that He takes the first place therein, whether in the order of constitution or of functioning. We cannot create or govern God.

Secondly, since God is included in the Church through Christ, of Whom it is written that *He hath given all things into His hands:* who is the Head of supernatural descent, the conjoint instrument of the Godhead and participating in His human nature in all His prerogatives, it also goes without saying that under God, or rather jointly with God, the holder of the first place in the Church is Christ.

Whence arises the classic thesis of theologians and preachers of the kingship of Christ. A spiritual kingship, whereof the name *Christ* is only the expression, seeing that Christ (Χριστός) means anointed, consecrated as a king for the government of souls.

So far there is no difficulty. The Church is the Kingdom of Christ, and so the *Kingdom of God.* We cannot change this kingdom into a republic of which the God-Man will have the honour of being president, nor into a constitutional monarchy where He will reign with diminished power, half decorative. God must reign actually through Christ in the unity of a government in which there is no room to distinguish between what belongs to the Father and what belongs to the Son, because the One is in the Other and acts through the Other. We must leave to unity what belongs to unity, and to God what belongs to God.

Once more, since Christ returned to the unseen world, if there has been a visible representative of Christ in the Church; if it has been said to anyone: *As My Father hath sent Me, so also I send you—Go and teach all nations,* which is the power that we call MAGISTERIUM; *Baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,* and *Do this for a memorial of Me,* which is the sacramental power called MINISTRY; *Whoso heareth you heareth Me, and whoso despiseth you despiseth Me—Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven,* which is the power of government (IMPERIUM), comprising the *legislative, judicial* and *executive* powers, all three necessary for a true government; if such there is, the College of the Twelve and their authentic successors will be the first authority in the name of Christ and in union with Christ. The whole Christian people will depend thereon as a flock on its shepherds, the flock as a whole on them as a whole, and each particular flock rendered necessary by local demands depending on each of them, without prejudice to the unity that embraces all the groups.

Here again the deduction is inevitable. We are not going

to prevent Christ from realising His divine intentions; and He who was but a passing influence so far as concerns His visible walking with men, He who died and yet in the spiritual world is King of ages, will not be withheld from finding a way in which to realise His loving promise: *I will not leave you orphans—Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*

Lastly, if the Twelve and their successors set over the flock are not themselves to be an amorphous flock; if what is multiplied must return to unity to be made perfect; if Christ meant to give Himself a representation not only collective, but also individual, as His visible survival, and if He said to one of the Twelve: *Feed My lambs,* that is the faithful; *Feed My sheep,* that is the pastors; and again, *I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,* as to a major-domo of the palace, to whom he must go who is desirous of approaching the master; and if, in consequence, when Christ has departed, Peter is a Christ by proxy, by mission and by the assistance of heaven; if this too be true, then he who will be at the head of the Church will be the successor of Peter, and the other bishops will be in relation to him what all bishops are in relation to Christ, what Christ is in relation to God; all will be only an emanation, a derivation of the sovereign power of salvation.

The monarchical character of the Church is here fully apparent. But it is so only on condition of retaining all the links of the chain.

But for the Protestants there is a gap in this succession of human-divine facts. God sends Christ, and Christ is God—at least for those who are orthodox; for as for the rest, one does not quite know what they believe. But Christ is not in relation with us through the Church. Starting from Him, the direction changes. It ascends again, instead of continuing to descend. It is we who go to meet Christ. We adhere to Him across time, as to an historical character, and that each for himself, each on his own responsibility, the Bible serving as a bridge between the isolated Christian, perhaps ignorant, but in any case free to make his own comment, and the far-off Christ who is his whole life. What a fragile bridge! . . .

It is true that we place ourselves, in reading the Bible, under the presumed light of the Holy Ghost, each his own Holy Ghost, if I may dare to say so, as if God had arranged to enlighten each of us separately from the rest in order to disunite us, and as if the broad sun which enlightens men or the common candelabrum which illuminates the feasting-hall of the Gospel were but the solitary candle that casts its flickering circle of light on an obscure text!

It is only after this that we, as the adherents of a common idea, undertake to form a Church. Thus the Church depends on us and not we on it. The authorities that govern it are of our creation, and the form of government will be that which we impose, always dependent on our initiative and always subject to revision.

Here the idea of the sovereignty of the people in the realm of the supernatural is very obvious. The systems have changed, but the fundamental principle has remained. Following Marsilius of Padua, a heretic of the fourteenth century, the Protestants have generally sustained the theory that the Church is democratic and not monarchical. It is the religious society as a whole which possesses the authority and delegates it to the pastors. Unless, indeed, this care be left to temporal princes, who are appointed for this very purpose of undertaking the burdens that weigh on their peoples! Thus conflicts between Church and State will be avoided, after the Church has been devoured by the State.

There follows a right of control, an eventual right of resistance, a right vested in the people or in their princely mandatories to depose the religious authorities, and many other things as well, according to the varieties of the systems constructed on this scheme.

We Catholics cannot reason thus. We do not claim to give the Church its constitution, but to receive our constitution from the Church. It is she who, in the name of Christ, begets us spiritually in baptism. She stands between Christ and us, a solid bond of a social character, because humanity is solid and social; it is not we, tiny, weak and isolated individuals, that make the tie between Christ and her.

We have not, then, to control her; it is she that controls us.

The descending scale of authority which passes from God to Christ is continued from Christ to the Church which emanates directly from Him, and in the Church, which is an organised, not a scattered society, it passes firstly to the Twelve and their successors, the Bishops, then, within the Twelve, to Peter, and his successor, the Pope.

Such is the system to which we give our allegiance.

The unity of the Church, St. Cyprian declares, is like the robe of Christ, which was woven without seam from top to bottom (*desuper*). "One God, One Christ, One Church," he says again, meaning to sum up in these three words the whole of the supernatural régime, in that God, fully one; Christ, one with Him in unity of person; the Church, one with them both in its unity of organisation wherein Christ is found once more; the body of His envoys, grouped around His own representative; these are the complete integration of the divine work.

In spite, then, of the various parts that our authorities share among us, in order better to be adapted to human life, there is among us no real division of authority. We are under a single government, that of Christ, the King of souls, who binds us to the single and supreme government of God, the universal King.

Hereby we see that the monarchical principle is the foundation of the Church, because it is the foundation of the complete reality which has God for its head, and the foundation of the supernatural reality of mankind which has Christ for its head, since the whole human race has its religious solidity not of itself and on its own initiative, but by institution and in its divine and human Christ.

Without wishing to be suspected of a desire here to introduce political speculations, it must be granted to the defenders of royalty that monarchy is in itself, in its ideal, the most perfect form of government, because the unity of order obtained more or less in democracy or aristocracy is only a kind of secondary unity, which in the long run demands the other. That is why the universal régime is ultra-monarchical, under the name of divine government.

It remains to enquire if men live solely by the ideal, and if God, represented by the rulers of the State, is Himself sufficiently to be found there. In the Church He is to be found, because He dwells in her through the Spirit. Whence it follows that monarchy is of right in the Church, and that at any rate in essentials she offers no danger of oppression, whether in regard to secondary authorities, or in regard to liberties.

Long ago Seneca said : *Parere Deo libertas est,* to obey God is liberty. If the religious chain, passing through the bishop, the Pope, Christ, binds us to God and His immanent law through the Holy Spirit, liberty, so far as it is contained under this law, has nothing to fear. God does not tyrannise : He makes us live.

All the same, particular authorities, bound to us on the one hand and to God on the other, do not lose their power over us by the fact that they hold to God. And if it is through an intermediary that they are bound to Him, they do not lose their prerogatives from the fact that they possess them and exercise them by virtue of a dependence which is in the long run a dependence on God. God, once again, absorbs nothing ; He gives all things.

If we did not fear to tire the reader by an appeal to a very familiar comparison, we would say : the government of the Church is monarchical in the same way as is that of the living being. There is nothing less democratic than a living

creature. Those who call it a *colony of cells* state a partial truth relatively to the processes of the construction of tissues and the realisation of the organic plan; but to use this as a complete definition of the living creature would belong to a very flimsy philosophy.

The primary thing in the living body is not the cells, nor the parts in general; it is the whole, and in the whole, the principle of the whole, which is the vital idea, what is called the soul. In the body of the Church, also, the first thing is the soul, namely, the divine Spirit communicated by Christ the Son of God and by the Father who sent Him.

After that, the first thing in the living body is the central nervous system, and that is not a number of anarchic cells. In the Church, the first thing as a visible element is the episcopal body united to the Pope; the brain from which proceed, under the action of the Holy Ghost, both the thought, under the name of dogma, and movement, under the name of government, and the whole of the life that comes from Christ for the benefit of souls, by the flow of the sacraments.

In the one case as in the other unity begins from the top (*desuper*); it is not a result; it is not the multitude that creates it by organising itself, but on the contrary the organisation issues from it.

In architecture, is it the stones that in the first place explain the house? What explains the house is the idea of the architect, and next the initiative of the builders. After that the stones receive their organisation.

Hence comes that profound thought which has determined the order of the Creed: *I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Body, and Life Everlasting.* In this series the Spirit of God takes the first place. The Church is attached to It as to its organising principle. The communion of saints expresses the fundamental law of the Church, which is charity under the action of the Spirit. The resurrection of the body and eternal life are the results of their work.

CHAPTER III

THE PART OF THE GOVERNED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

THE Church, then, is not a democracy. Authority in her comes from above, since it comes from God, through Christ, and since Christ has regulated its outflow to us by the foundation of a permanent mission, the Twelve, with an authentic succession in the episcopal body; and then, at the head of the Twelve, Peter, with his authentic succession in the Papacy.

Does this mean that all we are merely passive in the Church? we passive under our immediate authorities, the immediate authorities passive under higher authorities, and those passive themselves, doubtless, under the supreme visible authority of the Pope, the invisible authority of Christ, and in the last resort that of the Holy Ghost?

Such a system of ruling all things by hidebound regulation, of hanging all things together from nail to nail, of abolishing all things, it might be said, in order to sanctify all things, and to make God—not *all things to all men in order to save all,* as the Apostle says, but what takes the place of all men in order to suppress them all, would be the very contrary of a real system of religious government.

Religion consists in *linking* us with God, not in absorbing us in Him. The religious system of government must be a system that excites, not that swallows up energies. Its purpose is not to eclipse or extinguish us, but to enkindle us with the whole flame of life. *I have come,* said the Saviour, *to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* (Luke xii. 49).

Government, then, among us, must leave room for our free action, and if it does so, this free action cannot fail to react on the authorities themselves in so far as they are human; and more than this, to modify what comes to them from on high, seeing that matter, and especially living matter, determines in part the result of the influences which it undergoes.

Philosophers have always counted matter among causes, and they are right, if it be true, as science teaches, that there is no action without reaction, in any order of phenomena.

Even were our Church a rigid mechanism in which transmitting organs pass on force to each other, under a single central motor, the faithful would not lack a share in its action. They would act in this way, that they would impose on the authority, by their manner of being and their manner of bearing themselves under the government of its law, particular methods of government, which would in itself be an influence on their part.

But the Church is not such a machine; she is a living organism. And in an organism what is moved, that is the particular organs and even the most minute cells, is equally the mover, by reason of the body's organic solidarity.

There is only one thing in the living creature which is a mover without being itself moved, and that is the vital idea, the soul. And even that is conditioned; a fact which is proved by this, that if the conditions are unfavourable, the organism swerves, suffers and dies, whereas the soul endeavours always to make it live.

In the Church the Holy Spirit is as it were our common soul. And this soul is independent, in that none of us can pretend to influence it in itself; but it depends for its effects upon the accepting of our liberties and the collaboration of our efforts. We are not, then, governed without our own participation, even by the soul of the Church. And it is even more true that we are not governed without our own participation by the human authorities which rule us in its name, but with less worth and power.

In this latter case we not only participate in the effects of the government, but we participate in a certain fashion in the government itself, without for all that coming back to the democratic principle which we excluded just now.

In a living body, indeed, in which a soul is at work, directing the body's functions towards certain results which are the work of life, the principal organs, and particularly the brain, the central nervous system, are also the principal points of application of the soul's action.

What animates a body is firstly and before all its brain-action. From this proceed the great streams which arouse and direct everything, by reason of that centralisation which is more and more perfectly revealed as we mount the scale of beings.

But this is not to say that the soul dwells exclusively in the brain. The soul is everywhere; *all in the whole and in each part,* as the philosophers say, in such fashion that the life which is communicated to the members by the brain does not prevent a direct communication to the members, by which the brain, in its turn, profits, as well as the centres on which it works.

So the divine Spirit which animates the hierarchy, in accordance with the Saviour's promise, also animates, in His name, those to whom it was said : *Know you not that your members are the temples of the Holy Ghost?*

The actual indwelling of God in us by grace is one of the fundamental dogmas of our faith. But if He is in us, as He is in the hierarchy, His communications in us and in it cannot be foreign to each other. What He gives to the hierarchy comes to us socially, by authority. What He gives to us

ascends to authority by another road, that of an influence which authority will judge and make its own, so that in respect of it we shall be governed and not governors; but which none the less will have its source among us, in one or in several of us, separately or in one of our groups; either an association with special ends, a religious family or a nation.

It is in this sense that we may say that initiatives come especially from the faithful; from authority come directions, controlling influences and restraints.

This is only partially true, because the first initiative in the matter of salvation necessarily comes from the Saviour and His representatives. By teaching in so far as it has direct revelation; by the ministry of the sacraments and the general direction of life, the hierarchy begins, because Christ begins and God begins. But in the course of the activities of salvation and as concerns the relative values it allows of, other initiatives can take their rise elsewhere, since God is present everywhere, and though He respects the order which He Himself has established, He is not a slave to it.

The grace of God, say the theologians, is not tied to the sacraments. Let us understand the word *sacrament* in the general sense that we have already several times attributed to it. Neither the sacrament of truth, which is teaching, nor the sacrament of holiness, which is ritual action, nor the sacrament of Christian activity, which is the exercise of government, contains all that God has willed to give to the organised whole of the faithful. There are private truths, bursts of sanctity which do not arise from ritual action; good directions are taken which are not enjoined. The God within, *the strength of things,* as the liturgy calls Him (*Rerum Deus tenax vigor*), pushes forth shoots at every point where His living creation allows His presence to flourish.

Nature is full of soul (πλήρης ψυχής), said Aristotle of old. Was he thinking, when he spoke thus, of that drama of forests and prairies where so much eager and urgent life abounds beneath the green suggested by the dash of an artist's brush? . . . Well, in religious humanity life thus abounds, and for the same reason. It is full of soul. The soul of the Divine Spirit penetrates it, and we see it escape everywhere from the fronds that come neither from the official sower nor from the forest-ranger, but issue directly from the immanent source of life diffused in all things.

We must not forget that this spontaneous life which gushes up from the root of our souls at the touch of the Spirit needs to be controlled. That is where we differ from the false mystics or the Protestants who throw aside authority, and ask us to put our belief in the God in them, that is in themselves. But what authority controls is not for all that of its

creation, and if it uses it although it has not created it, it has a right to say that life has been its collaborator.

Let us consider the Church no longer as an organism, which was our first metaphor, but as a nation or social body, which was our second, and we shall arrive at the same conclusion.

The Church, we have said, is a monarchy. But is it a monarchy whose government is influenced by no one? Is it an *autocracy* in the full and exclusive sense of the word? Such a being would be a monster, or else a maniac. Every personal régime is modified by various collaborations, without which it would become the most unsupportable tyranny. But a wise monarch organises this collaboration and extends it as far as he can, instead of attempting to lessen it; he surrounds himself with counsellors, leans on the opinion of the best of them, and sounds his people before he makes laws for them.

The law, according to philosophers, is a statement of reason (*dictamen rationis*). What governor or what government can claim a monopoly of reason? Authority *legally* represents reason in regard to the ends of the society; but it has no *real* claim to incarnate reason in itself. It knows, or ought to know, that useful lights may be obtained from the most humble citizen, and much more from the best citizens or from constituted bodies. And so it will desire to consult, to seek inspiration, while it retains the supreme power of decision.

Now what reason is to law in earthly governments, the action of the divine Spirit is to religious law in the Church. And as reason in a State is not the exclusive possession of its government, so the action of the Spirit is not exclusively to be found in our chiefs, although in this case—and it is here that the comparison breaks down—they are promised a special assistance.

Religious authority, then, knowing that the Holy Spirit is not entirely confined to her, but that He is diffused throughout the whole Church, giving life to the faithful and breathing truth into them, affording them grace and useful impulses, listens as well as speaks; is passive as well as active; and sanctifies her own sanctifying work by means of the social infiltrations that reach her.

And by saying *infiltrations* we do not mean to exclude more direct action. Christians make petitions, and their humble supplications are not counted for nothing. At certain epochs popular intervention was valued so highly that the celebrated adage *Vox populi vox Dei* seemed to be an axiom of government. Admonitions, assuredly the most vivid form of popular collaboration, admonitions certainly respectful, and also energetic and insistent, were addressed to the highest authorities, and that by persons who, like Catherine of Siena or St. Vincent Ferrer, could feel themselves authorised to do so by

nothing less than what was at least the hope that God expressed Himself through them. But their authorities recognised it.

To listen thus to the voice of God from without is not to cease to count on the voice of God within, but only to hear it everywhere. And it is not abdication, since if the authority thus submits in appearance to the judgement of an inferior, it is to a judgement of which the authority itself remains judge; but with a judgement better judged, better prepared, better controlled, while awaiting God's sanction for it.

On this side, the Church, which is not a democracy, shares, like every wise power, the features of democracy. Also, like every wise power, she shares the features of aristocracy, in that the secondary authorities, bishops, priests, deacons, dignitaries of whatever sort, exercise authority in a very real sense without authority being divided.

They do not divide it, and in this sense do not *share* it, because it must remain one, since it is entirely a thing of Christ, who is not divided; but they participate in it, by virtue of a communication which supposes a counterweight of influence.

They have, by election, a part in the constitution of the authority. They have moreover, by their private or organised advice, by the direct government of a part of the flock, a part in its exercise.

We shall have an opportunity of dealing more precisely with this co-operation in each case; but at the moment the principle is enough. It enables us to conclude that if, as the wisdom of the ancients thought, it be true that the best government is that which unites the participation of all with the action of the best, controlled and centralised in a single person; then the governmental system of the Church is manifestly as near perfection as possible.

It remains to make it efficacious by means of a kind of collaboration which is the most necessary of all, and the demand for which, although apparently purely exhortatory, fundamentally corresponds with what we are treating of. We must collaborate by giving it our hearts.

Authority, indeed, has no other purpose, in any association whatever, than to procure the good of the society. And what, among the children of Christ, is the good of the society, but charity under its double aspect; love of God and of one's neighbour, including all the virtues which arise from it and protect them, invoking that moral progress which is their growth, while awaiting their consummation later?

Charity of heart is the Church's most precious possession. Better, from this final and fundamental point of view, a virtuous soul than an authority, and a saint than a Pope, if the

Pope be no saint. The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, as Jesus testifies—and the Kingdom of heaven whereof He spoke is in the first place the Church—is not Peter nor any of the Twelve, at least by virtue of their headship, it is the humble and upright little child, and whoever is like him.

It is true that the graces of authority are greater socially and visibly; we are not ranked in order of sanctity; but the interior graces are greater absolutely considered, and more efficacious in the end. This follows from the teaching of St. Paul concerning the divine gifts; this follows from his doctrine of authority, which he puts always " at the service of the Spirit " (2 Cor. iii. 8), precisely because it is its rule.

None can dispense with the rule, a society even less than a man; but without the urge of life and the virtues which the Spirit, when obeyed, arouses in us, the rule would be but a rope dangling over the abyss; the whole of the Church's governmental system would be a mill without wheat to grind, and then what would matter the perfection of its machinery?

That formalism which the Gospel calls Pharisaism has never been able to save anyone.

The faith is preached to us; it cannot be *given* to us. The Church prescribes a path for us, but she cannot walk in it on our behalf, nor even lead us in that way. She gives us the sacraments, and the sacraments, efficacious by institution, may through our action reverse their efficacy. But if this were general, the reaction on the whole body and on the government itself would be deadly; not in its source, which is divine, but in its methods of application and its efficacy.

Government can no longer be carried on when the subjects no longer obey. The strength of governments is the good will of their peoples. When this good will is lacking, the machine cools and stops.

Let us not be afraid that the Church will ever stop, for the Spirit of holiness which lives in her has means of limiting the evil and of preventing the general effects which might arise from it. History shows that the trials of the Church, even her moral trials, cause her hidden virtues to come to light in all directions. But if the Church does not perish, she may all the same decrease, from the fact that in each one of us life may be exhausted.

It is for us to give to the hierarchy the support which alone can make it fully efficacious for us and useful for the whole work that is incumbent on it. Of this work and its conditions Paul spoke to the Corinthians, too much attached to particular persons of the hierarchy, when he said to them: *I have planted; Apollo watered; but it is God*—God working within, God obeyed—*who giveth the increase.*

CHAPTER IV

THE POPE

ALTHOUGH the Church's régime admits of wide co-operation on the part of her subjects and her secondary authorities, it is none the less a centralised and fundamentally monarchical system, because the spiritual authority under which we rank ourselves is in the last resort divine.

We are governed in the Church by revelation, which is a communication of the Primary Truth; by the sacramental system, which is an outflow of the divinity, and by an authority which, since it extends to the last end, must arise from the First Authority.

All, then, descends from on high. And the first stage, if there be one, is Christ. The Father, who is *greater than He* considered as man, but with whom, through the grace of union, *He makes only one,* communicates to Him the good things destined for the human race. The Son of Man reigns with God over that organisation which is called in the Gospel the *Kingdom of God,* to denote the character of the authority that governs it.

Starting from Christ, we have seen how divine authority is passed on by means of the permanent mission organised by the Saviour as a kind of collective representative of Him. The episcopate, the true successor of the Twelve, incarnates this mission.

But since the mission is collective, it cannot itself be inorganic. It has a chief. And this chief, at its head, plays the part which Christ Himself played among the Apostles; he is the substitute for Christ, he represents the Sender among the group of the sent, lends his visibility to the invisible Chief who is again hidden in mystery, ceases not to rule His household by His Spirit incessantly communicated, by His sacramental presence, and by His manifold action in our rites.

Peter, the steward of the Kingdom of Heaven, thanks to the keys which His Master has conferred upon him, and Peter's successor, the inheritor of his power, who represents like him, now that Christ has departed, the permanence of Christ's action, are then the supreme authority among us. We have already emphasised this in dealing with the Roman character of the Church.

Such an authority can only be plenary, with regard to all the needs which arise from the permanent mission of the Saviour.

The Saviour Himself is the centre, not only of the visible and hierarchical Church, but also of all men, living, dead, or yet to be born; of nature itself, even, and of the whole universe with all its destinies, seeing that it too has a part in

the human plan. The Pope has no such power as this. He is simply the head of the Saviour's mission, and that mission is concerned with the present and the visible. But in regard to these his power is plenary, for it is not other than that of Christ Himself. The Pope has not an authority intermediate between that of Christ and that of the Episcopate. He is Christ Himself ruling the Episcopate of His Church vicariously.

It is of the essence of a vicariate that it constitute no new hierarchical degree; but that it permit identity to subsist by communication between the chief who is represented and his mandatory. An ambassador, within the limits of his powers, is not an authority set under the ruler he represents, but he exercises the authority of that ruler himself. So in the Church the Pope exercises Christ's authority; he governs in Christ's name, forming as His vicar one single and only authority with Him, and acting as the foundation-stone of the spiritual building conjointly with Him who is called the Corner-stone.

That is what the divine Master meant when He gave to His representative the symbolic name of *Kephas,* Peter. The Pope, who thus bears the name of Christ, *corner-stone* or foundation-stone, will be seen to enjoy all Christ's prerogatives as far as concerns His proper mission.

Firstly the magisterium, that is the teaching authority. Not that the Pope has authority to teach anything new after Christ; he teaches nothing new; but he is at the head of those to whom it was said : *Go and teach all nations,* TEACHING THEM WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU.

And thus he is the chief teacher of God's doctrine to men. He *confirms his brethren* in the faith; he organises the creed, interprets it, defends it, solves as a sovereign authority the questions to which it gives rise, acts as the last court of appeal in the disputes which such questions cannot fail to raise in a coherent society, which is united by this very means, but is yet so varied in intelligence, and tempted, too, in this respect as in every other.

All the powers of evil are not of the practical order. There is the demon of intellectual pride, the demon of self-opinionatedness, of stubbornness, of cavilling and contention in respect of others.

Jesus had foreseen this, and wished to provide against it, when He said : *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. And do thou strengthen thy brethren.*

Notice this singular and plural. Satan hath desired to have *you,* all of you, to sift you, that is to disturb and trouble you with various thoughts. You, My envoys, will have to undergo his attacks in these things. But THOU, Simon Peter,

if thou also art troubled and disturbed by perplexities about My word, remember that *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.* And then do THOU, thou in particular, thou as their chief, *strengthen thy brethren.*

Here the privilege of infallibility comes in. But that must be considered separately.

The second prerogative essential to the vicariate of Peter's successor is government. *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven* (Matt. xvi. 19). This means that the authority of Christ, now returned to heaven, is not for all that absent from His work. He has communicated it. And He has communicated it, doubtless, to the whole group of His envoys collectively; so He will say to them all, a little later on and in the same terms (*Ibid.* xviii. 18): *Whatsoever* YOU *shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* But, says Bossuet, " the continuation does not invalidate the beginning. . . . This first statement, *Whatsoever* THOU *shalt bind,* said to one alone, has in itself already put under the authority of that one all those to whom *Whatsoever* YOU *shall loose* was to be said later.[1]

Feed My lambs, said the Saviour also at His departure; *feed My sheep* (John xxi. 15-17). And on this St. Ambrose wrote: " Firstly the lambs, then the sheep are committed to his care; for he is appointed not only shepherd, but shepherd of shepherds. He feeds the lambs, and he feeds the sheep; he feeds the children, and he feeds also the mothers (that is the churches), he rules both subjects and prelates."[2]

All hangs on these words of institution. Jesus said: Feed *My* sheep, feed *My* lambs; that is, I do not lose them, nor the power that I have over them, but I communicate this power, so that it may be exercised in My name. Thou, Peter, shalt be shepherd, with Me and in Me, thou shalt be one sole shepherd with Me.

And again, Jesus does not say: Feed My flock, as if speaking collectively, but *My lambs, My sheep,* putting the part for the whole, as if He meant to name each of them, to entrust to Peter's care not only the whole body of the faithful, but each of the faithful, not only the body of churches as a whole, but each separate church. And by this He meant that the authority of Peter and his successors over the churches and the faithful is immediate, that is, that he can give orders to each and to all, individuals or groups, faithful, pastors, particular Churches or the universal Church.

Ordinarily, apart from the greater matters which the Pope

[1] Sermon on the Unity of the Church.
[2] Expos. in Luc. x. 175.

reserves to himself, this authority is exercised by varying degrees, as wisdom demands; but there is in this no necessary jurisdiction; for since in the Church the authority is one and the Pope has it in its fulness, he can at need suffice for all, and it depends on him to determine in accordance with what forms and to what extent it is fitting for him to impart or to reserve its exercise.

The Pope, also, is supreme judge, in default of which his government would lose its efficacy. And his decision is without appeal. We cannot even say with Pascal in the time of his forgotten Jansenists: *Ad tuum Domine Jesu tribunal appello;* To thine own tribunal, O Lord Jesus, I make my appeal. This cry, touching as it is, is justified in certain cases; but that is when authority is not acting in accordance with its law and in its own field. In its own domain and when following its own law the Pope's authority cannot yield to that of Christ, for they are the same.

Lastly, the legislative and judicial power of the Sovereign Pontiff supposes as its consequence the power of making use of sanctions; sanctions, it is of course understood, conformable to the nature of his jurisdiction; and hence arise the canonical punishments of which he is the supreme dispenser.

As Pontiff properly so called, that is as concerns sacramental action, the Pope is nothing more than a bishop; but in the usage of the sacraments and the rites that accompany them, he is master here as elsewhere; he is the master of liturgies; he arranges the whole and the details of divine worship, so as to give the Church's mysteries means in relation to times, places and persons.

These various rôles and the spirit that is needed for their fulfilment are reflected in the names which the Head of the Church has traditionally received; in the exterior badges with which his dignity is adorned.

He is called the Pope, that is the father, father *par excellence* in supernatural things, father of fathers, since he is at the head of those who beget us in the faith by instruction, in Christian life by baptism; at the head of those who govern us with a government which ought to be entirely paternal, since it applies the law of love and its effort expressed by St. Paul in the cry: *The charity of Christ urgeth us: Caritas Christi urget nos.*

He is called Vicar of Christ, and we have already explained the reason for that name; by delegation he carries on the work of Christ and is His procurator in His earthly mission.

He is called *Holy Father* or *Most Holy Father,* not so much in filial allusion to his personal sanctity which is piously supposed, as to mark the holiness of his office, the holiness of the teaching and the laws he promulgates, the holiness of

Christ whom he represents and of the Spirit whose instrument he is.

He is called *Sovereign Pontiff* and *Bishop of Bishops* to denote that the hierarchical order finds its perfect unity in the single shepherd of the single flock of the Gospel.

He calls himself, in his apostolic letters, *Servant of the servants of God,* in memory of that formula of the Master when He defined authority under the Christian régime : *Let him that is chief among you be the servant of all.* And this humble but sublime appellation marks the goal of authority as well as its spirit. It urges us to the service of God, since so, and only so, can it be at our service.

The three-crowned tiara represents the threefold power, doctrinal, legislative, judicial. The pallium, a smaller form of the old Byzantine mantle which the emperors gave to the pontiffs, is in the Roman pontiff a sign of universal jurisdiction, inasmuch as he wears it always and everywhere, unlike the bishops and archbishops who make a restricted use of it as of their authority. The Cross which is borne before the Pope on ceremonial occasions shows in Whose Name he advances. And so of the rest. The symbols are numerous in the external splendour which surrounds religious authority. But the idea is always the same; plenary power, universal power, the power of Christ communicated, and thereby divine power in the visible world for the ends of heaven.

The Pope, in the name of his office, claims no temporal dignity or principality; but in the name of his office he claims that full and entire independence that he needs in order that the spiritual may soar above the meshes of the political web, above the disturbances by which national or international waters are always more or less troubled.

It has become apparent in the course of ages that the best guarantee of this temporal independence is a temporal princedom of small extent, merely capable of removing the Pontificate from the grasp of any particular State, to the detriment of apostolic liberties and of the confidence of peoples. "It is necessary," as was declared by the deliberation of the bishops in 1682, "that the Head of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff, should be neither the subject nor even the guest of any prince; but that, seated in his own domain and kingdom, he should be *sui juris,* that he may be able to preserve and propagate the faith, rule and govern the whole Christian commonwealth, in a noble, calm and august liberty."

Napoleon thought such an institution "the wisest and most advantageous that could be imagined for the government of souls." We may well believe him; for in certain respects this institution was very uncongenial to him.

Now that this time-honoured institution has perished and

the Holy See is reduced to a position of protest, now that historical changes have undoubtedly made it difficult to return to the ancient state of things pure and simple; if we discover any other solution, let us say so; the Papacy will decide. To the Papacy alone it belongs to utter a final verdict in this matter. When one has no superior, one can finally decide on the conditions of one's own status.

To sum up, the Papacy presents itself to us as the unifying organ of the whole work of Christ and of all the faithful in the Christ whom it represents; of all the scattered souls who benefit by His redemption and of all His offices. All that moves in the Church finds therein its centre of movement and its prospect of return. All starts from Rome; all comes back thereto. The brightness of the tiara is caused by an immense radiance which, from the dome of St. Peter's where it seems to shine, scatters in all directions its active light and sees thousands of answering eyes turn to it. It is the lighthouse which, on the uneven coast, above the hidden rocks, at the crossing of roads unexplored and full of pitfalls, guides, warns or strengthens by means of its light, plays the part of a star, and speaks the message of hope by calling up the vision of the haven.

When the General Council calls to Rome hundreds of bishops, coming from all parts of the globe, bearing homage, prayers, and tokens of the religious thought of millions of sculs, that is, the palpable sign of the unity which the Papacy procures; it is a march towards the star on the part of mankind, which attempts across space to reach a point where it knows that its God rests in His institution of salvation, as He did in the manger at Bethlehem.

But there is nothing more in this visible convergence of travellers than in the calm daily reality. Towards Rome ever goes the road of the heart and the mind; it can always be traversed; the true faithful traverse it daily. And it is no negligible motive for faith, this vast adhesion of elements borrowed from every race and every nation, from every rank and every stage of culture, from every age and every degree of civilisation; elements differing in all things except in belief and the essentials of worship, in adhesion to an undivided centre which allows it to be said, *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia;* where Peter is, there is the Church.

If bonds of flesh attach us to our families and our countries, which are our mothers according to the flesh, it seems indeed that only the grace of God could attach us durably and deeply to the family of the children of God, who, born only of the Spirit, can subsist only in Him.

There is more than man in this. There is the witness of a divine presence.

CHAPTER V

THE INFALLIBLE MAGISTERIUM

IN the visions of the Apocalypse which relate to the Church triumphant is found this phrase, so profound in its symbolism : *And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to enlighten it, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Strange kingdom of light, seeming twofold and yet one, where the Lamb is the light, and yet the glory of God is the sole light of the city !

The mystery of communications through Christ is indicated here. There are not two lights; there is but one. But the ineffable light, like the vibrations of the ethereal fluid, which our eyes do not perceive, is gathered up in the Son of Man, who acts as its luminary. And it is just to apply this mystery to the city of God in this world, since the earthly city forms but one with the heavenly, in spite of useful and provisional partitions.

God is the sole light of men. We call upon no other source. We must not let it be said that in spiritual matters we believe in any light other than Him. But God is revealed to men through Christ; He has made the Lamb, sacrificed and glorified, the Light of the City, so allowing Him to say, though by communication so far as concerns His manhood : *I am the Light of the world.*

Though the Lamb has returned into the invisible, He has not for all that left our regions of earth bereft of light. The teaching of the Gospel instructs us. But teaching without a living authority—we know what happens to that !

When Aristotle was dead, his teaching, so coherent, so elevated in its positiveness, so admirably synthetic, fell into the hands of disciples of diverse tendencies, who dragged it in all directions and finally turned it in the direction of materialism. In the Middle Ages, when the Arabs took it up once more, they urged it in the direction of pantheism. To-day, those who study it in partial texts, as are our texts of the Gospels; obscure texts, as are our oracles often; texts in consequence susceptible of various interpretations, as exegesis proves to be the case with sacred writings, do not know what to make of it.

Crumbling, error, disputes without result, and finally practical nothingness; this is what would have awaited the *Good News,* if its mere perfume had remained to us in memories, or even its crystallisation in texts without any living representative. So true is it that all the sects which have stood on their dignity have arrived at a doctrinal confusion the more accentuated the more alive they have been. The stagnation

of some proves simply their death. It has gone so far that book after book has been written among the Dissenters to throw light on that primordial problem : What is the essence of Christianity?

The divine Master, then, knowing *what was in man,* as the apostle John says, and possessing other means than an Aristotle in quest of a fleeing posterity, organised His earthly representatives from the doctrinal as from the practical point of view. He Himself was the Light; He was departing; He appointed a light in His place, a substituted light, as it were; a light which shone with His light and not with a new light of its own. And this by a unity of communication whereof He, together with God, remained the source; by a continuity which would preserve the lights of the Gospel from extinction, urge their rays in every direction, shoot them forth on every instance, use them for all intellectual and practical measures; but without innovation in any respect.

Nothing in the Church would be a sun, a moon, a star, that furnished its own light to the supernatural. The Lamb alone would be the luminary; the glory of God alone the light; but there would be continuity of the communication of the light by means of an unfailing organ called the Papacy.

Such a centre of unification is Papal infallibility, and we promised to define it more in detail, although really everything is clear from a right consideration of what has gone before.

The first thing to be noticed is that infallibility, being a guarantee for us all, is not a personal privilege in the sense that the Pope should benefit by it more than we; he benefits by it as we all do, and like us he is bound to submit to it and to believe it. The Pope has *faith* in infallibility; he has *faith* in his own decisions. He is bound to them as is the most humble of the faithful; and this is the proof that it does not belong to him, and that even here the Holy Spirit is the sole light. Neither is infallibility a personal privilege in the sense that the Pope has its conditions in himself, as if we supposed he had some special psychology of his own. The Pope, considered as a private person, is a man like any other, weak as we are, a sinner as we are and subject to error like every one of us. Of this we have the proof that certain Popes have written works of theology which enjoy no special authority in the Church; that are freely contradicted. The simple monk St. Thomas is far more important as a doctor of the Church than Pope Benedict XIV., though the latter has his importance.

From this we see the value of the reproaches of idolatry that some bring against us in this connection, as if infallibility were the deification of a man.

We deify none but God; but we deify God enough to put Him above the petty conventional pride and the thanklessness that would prevent Him from condescending to mankind.

He condescended to create and to redeem us. He condescends still more in continuing to redeem us in all the spheres in which we need to be restored.

Of ourselves we slip into unfathomable error; we are the Danaïds of religious truth. If we are to be redeemed from doctrinal destruction, we must by some means or other be guaranteed the minimum of necessary truths. Christ's means is that prayer *which the Father heareth always,* and which in this matter obtains freedom from liability to error. *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*

Christ's prayer is efficacious enough to save us from darkness. But it is easily seen that there is no question of new revelation, or of inspiration, or of the inbreathing of truth into a human mind; it is a question of providential preservation.

Our Popes are no supermen, nor demigods after the pagan manner. Such an interpretation must be left to the semi-conscious bad faith or the unpardonable thoughtlessness of some of the dissenters from the Faith. Our Popes are feeble mortals receiving assistance. They do not reap the benefit of a psychological miracle. The Saviour prayed for them; that is enough. His all-powerful prayer obtains, by means that differ in their operation in each case, according to the disposition of providence, what we can ask for ourselves, though with less efficacy, when we say to God: Keep me from error.

Hence in the second place infallibility has a definite purpose: it is the perpetuation of Christ's teaching; it is the purport of the mission expressed in the words: *Teach them* WHAT I HAVE APPOINTED YOU. And that is not the earth's rotation.

No scientific or historical theory, no philosophical system falls as such under the ecclesiastical magisterium. If the Church troubles about such a thing and issues judgement on it, it is only when its conclusions imply some denial of the sacred deposit. In such a case the same jurisdiction that knows itself to be judge of the deposit knows itself also to be judge of that deposit's contrary; but, as we already know, that is no abuse of power; the liberty of scientific methods remains untouched.[1]

In the third place, when we attribute infallibility to Peter's successor, that is in the main, we do not attribute it to him exclusively. We must not forget that it was said, in the plural, *Go* YE, *and teach all nations.* The privilege of freedom from error in matters of religious teaching is a privilege

[1] *Cf.* Book ii., chap. ix.: "On Intellectual Liberty in the Church."

that is a part of the mission; it belongs to the whole missionary band, and in them to the whole Church.

Likewise the decisions of the Councils, from the Council of Jerusalem presided over by St. Peter himself, are drawn up in the plural. *It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,* said our first fathers. But the apostolic or episcopal college only enjoys the common privilege through its unity obtained by the head, and depending on the head, by virtue of the confirmation with which Peter was charged in respect of his brethren: *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and do thou strengthen thy brethren.*

The infallibility of the apostolic college and of its episcopal successors is a strengthened infallibility; that of Peter and his successor the Pope is a strengthening one. So that a decision is only covered by the Saviour's efficacious promises if it is made in union with Peter and confirmed by him in accordance with the laws of his own mission. What the Council says without the Pope, and even more so in opposition to the Pope, is null; what the Pope says without the Council is sufficient in itself.

All the same, it is his part to proceed according to God who does all things with wisdom, to enlighten himself with the common lights and ordinarily to find in such agreement the human means of the divinely guaranteed inerrancy. But if this be lacking, the promise of Christ is not for all that of no avail. The failing of one will not work the destruction of all. God has means of saving in all circumstances what He has willed to save.

Thus the preservation of the Faith in the Church is the work of the Twelve collectively and of Peter in the first instance, of the body of bishops as a whole united to its head, and of the head by right of primacy which affords him a unique and personal prerogative. We say *singular,* or *personal,* not, once more, because it belongs to him as a private person; it belongs to the hierarchical person, it belongs to the office; but in that office and in him alone is it concentrated in its fulness, and it is in this sense *singular.*

On the other hand, it does not depend on the whole body; on the contrary, it is communicated to them, coming from Christ and from God, and in that sense it is *personal.* We have said already that religious democracy, which makes power, doctrinal or otherwise, ascend instead of making it descend by progressive communication, is the contrary of the divine régime.

Can anyone recognise in these very simple deductions—quite simple when starting from what we believe to be God's intentions as to humanity—can anyone recognise the phantom power pursued to such an extent with sarcasm and

hate on the morrow of the Vatican Council? The defiance of an age of enlightenment, the Byzantinism and idolatry, the autocracy opposed to all the principles of modern life, and so on! . . .

For some twenty years there was an outcry, and then, since people cannot always go on thinking about the same things, the matter was forgotten; but it is enough merely to say the words *Papal infallibility* to see in certain quarters a smile on the lips, or hear some half-uttered blasphemy, the echo of the keen combats of yesterday.

But before smiling or blaspheming it is well to understand. What we claim is so very unsurprising, so natural, even, on the hypothesis of a positive revelation, that there can be found even unbelievers, and some Protestants among the Christian dissenters—I mention these in particular because their characteristic is precisely opposition to the Holy See—who broadly acknowledge it.

We will mention only one; but one who can be disregarded neither by his co-religionists, among whom he enjoys a well-deserved prestige, nor by others, seeing that he is one of the most remarkable of men. Auguste Sabatier,[1] in an analysis of the notion of dogma, proves at length that if a fixed dogma be desired, it must necessarily be watched over by infallibility. And assuredly such a demonstration was not difficult; it is at least sincere.

It goes without saying, of course, that the author does not offer this as a reason for adhering to the Pope; but as a reason for rejecting fixed dogma, to which orthodox Protestants, like Catholics, are still tied.

On this point we are settled, we need no new lights; but we are very glad to record the argument. If there is a revelation, we are told, there is a deposit of truth to be preserved; there is in the world a light which we must protect with a hand so that it may not be extinguished. But think of the storm of human opinions and contradictions! If there is a deposit, and if there is a permanent and fatal danger to which that deposit is exposed, one of two things must happen; either the Revealer must leave things to themselves and let the night overcome His light once more, perhaps without blame to anyone, or He must organise a system of safeguarding it. Instead of a torch exposed to the full force of the wind, we need a protected flame, the lighthouse whose glazed lantern protects the blaze against the gales from the sea.

"A dogma that is not open to discussion supposes an Infallible Church;" this is the proposition, unassailable as a rock, that our author establishes. Many thanks, dear enemy! It is in vain that you add after this that there is no

[1] *Les Religions d'autorité et les religions de l'Esprit.* Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?

dogma above discussion; that the Gospel has only "an entirely moral invitation, an experience and an invitation set before every man"; this leaves us unmoved. An experience, a consolation, a merely moral invitation—it is an anthem, it is the "old song" with which our ears are continually greeted. But we believe that the Saviour said A WORD; that He spoke *as one having authority,* as His hearers said; as He that *alone knew the secrets of heaven, since He came from heaven, and spoke that which He had heard from His Father,* as He Himself affirmed.

For us there is something that is above discussion, and we believe that it is the life of man's mind with regard to objects about which our science is entirely ignorant, although they are infinitely the most indispensable of all.

So, returning to your proposition, we say: A dogma above discussion presupposes an infallible Church? Very good. And let us add a point that you do not raise: An infallible Church supposes some person in that Church in whom infallibility may find its centre. Thereby will the dogma live, and we, in the religious sense, will live also, while you, with your "experience" entirely moral and consoling, will die the finest of doctrinal deaths. And indeed, I feel moved by a sympathetic pity when I hear you say, in a phrase which I admire from the literary point of view, apropos of the solemn definition of infallibility in 1870: "An apotheosis is nothing but a first-class burial."

A burial! For whom do you speak? Have corpses now got the right of giving burial certificates to the living? Who has become dissociated, like a body without a vital idea, undergoing more and more the effects of an arbitrary and antisocial principle; who has become reduced just where he most closely obeys your suggestions, to that state of magma in which are found substances rich—as you, O great mind—but without organic bond, given over to the anarchy of chance combinations—as happens in the depths of the earth, when the soul, that great mistress of unity, is no longer there?

And it is you, on your bier, not even sealed down—for all your artificial systems are coming to pieces—who intone the lament for us. Sleep on in peace, and do not trouble about the Church!

We have said already in dealing with unity, one of the notes of Catholicism, that the movement of concentration which the Church effected at the last Council, far from stifling her, has given her a wider freedom. It was the movement of a lion crouching to spring. The Lion of the tribe of Juda can make great bounds, and submits at times even to conditions of restraint. If ultramontanism is a restraint, we see and we shall see its relaxation especially

to-morrow; pliant, mighty, wide enough to espouse a great future, when the current disputes, sometimes so confused, but with the confusion of wealth, have come to an end.

Concentration is the first movement of life; expansion the second; and that from phase to phase, until one day, when the immortally living one has fulfilled its destiny, it will find in its eternal expansion, together with the peace which it has sought, a state of happiness for the manifold elements of which man is made. For it is we human beings who benefit by the supernatural life, which infallible truths guarantee for us in this world with the next in view.

CHAPTER VI

INFALLIBILITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

NOW that we have taken a good look at the phantom of papal infallibility which is such a dreadful bogey to some people, we have found that it vanishes and all is clear. Infallibility keeps the life of religion on its proper course, gives it stability, guarantees it against that dispersal which is the natural tendency of the human mind, since the storehouse of necessary truths is safeguarded by means of indisputable decisions.

When we come from the general meaning of this privilege to the privilege of infallibility attributed personally to the Roman Pontiff, we find its justification in the observation that authority in the Church does not ascend from the mass of the faithful to their heads and the supreme head, as in a democracy; but descends, in Christ's name, from the supreme chief, who *strengthens his brethren,* to the intermediate chiefs, the Bishops, who are strengthened; and then to the faithful, who are instructed; and thus the Church's infallibility has its centre in that of the Pope, coincides in a certain manner with it, so that we may say: Where Peter is, there is the Church. *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia.*

Infallibility, a quite simple thing, is none the less a fundamental one, and the more so as that which it is required to guarantee is more fundamental. Doctrine is, we have said, for the religious society, what its vital idea is to the living creature; that is, its principle of unity, its principle of separate existence, its principle of being.

Hereupon the question arises: Why was infallibility defined so late? Why in the nineteenth century? Essentials do not wait. The central thing ought to be found at the beginning, middle and end of an existence which pretends to be unchangeable. If things are otherwise, people might seem to be justified in saying, at the moment of a declaration which could not be foreseen: The Church is losing her way; she is being led by caprice and autocracy; and they have not refrained from saying thus!

This question must indeed be answered. It is not for us an embarrassing one, but it is interesting for more reasons than one.

That the essential does not wait is true. But that is one of those principles which mean nothing until their subject-matter is defined. To wait may mean either for the substance of a fact, or for its developments, or for its manifestation. Manifestation, in its turn, and also development, may

be partial, drawn out, perfected more or less, and finally complete and unquestionable.

Let the matter be considered in this light.

The first of all the councils, the meeting of the Twelve and the first disciples at Jerusalem to discuss the question of Jewish observances, shows us the initial functioning of the teaching hierarchy. Now why was it said, after the setting forth of the question and to introduce the decision, *It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us?* Such a manner of speaking leaves no room for doubt that the Church was conscious from the very start that she possessed in her hierarchy, at least taken collectively, a means of coming into unity with the highest Truth.

But let us remark that this decision, carried by a general vote, is uttered by St. Peter; that it is he who presides; that James, "the Lord's brother," who enjoyed a great personal authority both by reason of his relationship to our Lord and his holy life, only expresses his own opinion, in agreement with the general one, by a reference to Peter, and that the assembly "keeps silence" after Peter has concluded. Is not this an anticipation of *Roma locuta est, causa finita est:* Rome has spoken, the cause is ended, to be heard in later ages?

When St. Paul had already been preaching for three years on the faith of inspirations whose origin he knew, but which had not yet been proved, a scruple took possession of him, and, dreading self-interested bias, the cause of so many religious wounds that have had to be got rid of, he went up to Jerusalem to compare "his Gospel," that is his teaching, with . . . whose?—Peter's. He remained with him for a fortnight, saw only James, was careful to say that he saw none of the others, and returned in peace, ready to say to the Galatians, with that energy which has no fear of excess: *But though I, or an angel from heaven should preach to you another Gospel than that which I have preached to you, let him be anathema!*

Certainly, here infallibility is not working as clearly as it does to-day in the Catholic Church. We cannot think of claiming that it is; it would be neither honest nor intelligent; for to do so would be to conceal from our view a mark of the Church which is as dear to us as her infallibility, and which, far from contradicting it, is its complement, namely her progressive character.

We must repeat it once more: The Church is not a vehicle stuck fast in the mire. Neither is it a vehicle which travels on, fast or slow, loaded with immovable luggage. It is a living being. Its unchangeableness, then, is that of a living being, and every organ that forms part of it must act like a living organ, at first hidden in the mysterious seed, and then

revealed progressively, under the spur of necessity, as a result of inward and outward circumstances.

The Church possesses from the start the perfection of her essence, and consequently, even in the embryonic state, all that can in any age be called essential to her, but yet she has not from the start the whole of this essential in a fully-developed state. And as in a living being life becomes self-conscious and rises from stage to stage to its eventual full knowledge of itself, so the Church at her beginning has not the full and perfect consciousness of her essential constitution as far as her precise definitions are concerned.

Infallibility is no exception to this law, and there are moreover historical reasons to which we have already made allusion.

Not only was it not necessary that the infallibility proper to the Supreme Pontiff should come to light at the commencement; but it was natural that it should be relatively dim in St. Peter himself, and that after him, instead of growing forthwith, it should become weaker, and not continue its growth until later.

In all this is there any cause for astonishment? Let us reflect that in the Church the Papacy is only an organ meant to act as a substitute. It is Christ who is our Head; *You have but one Master,* He said. And a substitutive organ only functions fully when what it is intended to replace has quite disappeared.

On the morrow of the Master's death, the remembrance of Him was so present, and the contact of the Twelve with Him, apart from the distinction of hierarchy, was so intensely close that all were fully conscious of it. Were not they, whom Christ Himself had directly formed, in a way other Christs? Did not whoever heard them hear Him? All the divine words still sounded in their hearts. The Spirit had roused them to life there, after the momentary sleep of the Passion, like the bells under the hand of the ringer in the belfries of Bruges.

In all this Christ was, as it were, present in action. For the faithful, one of the Twelve, whoever it might be, was Christ hardly yet departed; He was the flame that is found in the smouldering ash, the heat of which is still to be felt. And if He Himself was still present, then of what use was explicit and ordinary recourse to the chief of a mission whose only claim to authority came through Him?

When Peter was dead, those of the Twelve who remained must have seemed entirely to eclipse his poor successor, who had never seen Christ; who had not touched Him; who had not heard the command: *Go and teach all nations.*

When the Twelve were dead, the particular churches which each of them had founded still retained through their imme-

diate memory of an apostle a continuity with Christ which only gradually became weaker.

The life of Jesus in His mortal Flesh; the appearances of Jesus risen; the surviving life of Jesus in the Twelve and in their immediate successors: such were the stages of the Saviour's visibility.

And this dispensed the primitive churches from the need of appealing, regularly at any rate, for there are numerous traces of occasional appeals, to a far-off central authority which had not yet gained a worldwide prestige.

It is only when the first generations were extinguished, the early memories enfeebled, the historical reality of Christ thrust back into the past and clothed in its veil, and time, instead of looking backwards, as it were, had definitely resumed its progress, so compelling the Church to turn about and to take a new direction, that this Church, seeking its Christ always in the visible world in which He had promised to remain, remembered clearly that He had left a vicar, a representative established from the very beginning, precisely to meet the needs of this future.

We may be allowed to suppose—although perhaps it is rather bold to form a hypothesis on such a matter—that if the Church had had to endure only two or three centuries, there would have been no Pope. He would not have been necessary. Christ Himself would have been the sole Pope, firstly in His own person, then, as we have explained above, in His person continued in men's memories.

But there was the future, and the future, besides demanding its Christ by deputy, as the visible mark of the unity of divine government in the Church, would reveal necessities for concentration which would continue to increase, as in living organisms life becomes concentrated the more as it becomes differentiated and widened.

Thus the Church's monarchical government had in doctrine as in all else to grow ever more and more manifest.

Until one day, when the moment had come for a complete taking possession of herself, for giving herself the strength to exist and act with her organisation complete and in the full light of day, for avoiding contradictions, for satisfying the doubts which would be possible to an indefinite extent, even among the most faithful, as long as the question of reliability, if we may so say—of divine reliability in this case—had not been resolutely put; and also for overcoming the illusions which would tend to assimilate the Church's divine government to the democratic constitutions which had spread on all sides,[1] when the moment had come for this supreme acquisition on the part of the hierarchy, the Church, in the

[1] It is this, partly, which, at the moment of the Syllabus, was being referred to as "coming to an agreement with modern civilisation."

Vatican, that is to say at her very centre, held her solemn assizes. And there, before God, by the action of His Spirit, trusting in the promise of Christ, she decided to proclaim what had, she knew, always been included in her innermost constitution.

There was no innovation; but the Church, more self-conscious and more enlightening, threw a fuller light on the triple crown, and so brought to perfection in the visible realm what had been perfected in the invisible on the day when Christ, returning to His Father's side, had inaugurated His eternal kingdom.

After this, need the question be put of more or less in the matter of years or centuries? Need it be asked why it took three or nearly three centuries to reveal the infallible primacy of the Roman pontiff in generalised historical facts, and why eighteen centuries to attain to its latest and most striking manifestation? Is it found to be a long while, too long, and consequently arbitrary?

We reply in the first place: in the eyes of Providence, on whom these things depend, *a thousand years are as one day and one day as a thousand years.* This saying of the Galilean fisherman is high enough in its philosophy to suffice for an answer. But we understand it better if we add: Three centuries, eighteen centuries, in relation to the whole life of the Church, are periods comparable and more than comparable to the months of nursing and adolescence of a human being.

Is it unusual for a human being not to be fully constituted or not to be recognised as such until the end of a period that unhappily represents a large part of the time that he has to spend on earth? The Church, with her apparent slowness, is of a more precocious vital power!

Shall we forget that her destinies coincide with those of our race; that the history of this human-divine synthesis of life through Christ, Man of the whole world and all time, is History, and its evolution the evolution of our inhabited planet?

Or again, are we to believe that the world is near its end? Are we to be the dupes of the childish prophecies which from time to time endeavour to take us back to the so-called terrors of the year 1000?

If we may be allowed to push this comparison, which perhaps may appear bold, but is in any event illuminating, a little further; the definitive installation of the Papacy in its historic rôle at the Vatican Council is a fact parallel to the definitive installation of the true religion in the world. In each case there was considerable delay, but delay that was normal relative to the duration of the whole.

Investigation, groping, error, all this is preparation; and this is all that there was before Christ. Then Christ came, and definitive religious history begins.

Put for Christ, the Pope—the Pope, I mean, in complete possession of his definite and generally recognised rôle; a similar succession appears. Here too is preparation; here too are the errors of heresy; here too are gropings on the part of the faithful and of private teachers, and lastly, with a formal inauguration, comes complete birth, that is, the bringing to the light of that which was prefigured in Simon Peter, but had remained more or less latent in the depths of the past.

Christ came in the *fulness of time,* St. Paul says, that is at a central moment between the preparations necessary for His work and the use which the future was to make of it.

The Papacy, armed with the whole of its powers, likewise arrives thus in a fulness of time which divides from the preparations for it the agelong utilisation on which a society can count from now on until the end of the world, a society which does not die but is transplanted.

So that the ironical phrase which we found a little while back on a heretical lip, with regard to the Vatican Council: *Apotheosis is only a first-class burial,* seems compelled once more to lose its sting.

What will die is that which is unable to merit apotheosis, having no divine life in it to make manifest, no growth to achieve, but on the contrary a principle of dissolution to be revealed more and more, and one day fully, in the tomb.

What will live is what apotheosis awaits, because, since it is divine in itself, it must make that which it bears unfold more and more from day to day, and fix it at last, from a human point of view, in definitive forms.

The apotheosis achieved; Christ fully manifested, and represented in an institution which possesses the whole of His importance in the mission He has given it, though under other aspects it is seen to be based on sinful and erring humanity, we see our Church, with all time before her. She goes forward in time with confidence, rich in all her energies; her strength in the unanimous adhesion of her members, in an anterior cohesion which has never been so strong as now; and this is a sign of life if aught can be one, for it is the contrary of anarchic mortification.

Every people that is perishing tears itself in its convulsions; that is a universal law. Every people that is *One,* in an environment in which its destiny maintains a *raison d'être,* is assured of its future.

The Church, which is *one* more than ever, and is more than ever necessary to a world that is terribly disturbed and unable to co-ordinate itself anew apart from her, shows to our eyes not only her immortal promises, but her charter of duration written in historical necessity.

In her last apotheosis, which will consist in rejoining Christ when He comes on the clouds of heaven, the papacy will die at last, but in glory, as at dawn die the lingering stars.

CHAPTER VII

THE EPISCOPAL ORDER

AFTER considering the Church's order in her chief, who is the expression of her unity, we must now study it in the episcopal body, which shares and communicates the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome.

An *order* in architecture is characterised by its columns and their junction with what they uphold. The bishops are the columns of the Church.

We have remarked how far this order descends from above and to what extent it is "related to the mysteries of heaven."[1] The source of its development is to be found in the Trinity. The Son proceeds from the Father, who finds in Him the *form of His substance*. The Church proceeds from Christ, and He is extended in her, she is His permanent and collective manifestation, His "Body." Likewise, the episcopal college, to which Jesus Christ has communicated His power that produces the Church, beget it through the priesthood, which they themselves possess in its completest form, and are afterwards found within it. Lastly, according to the same methods of initiative and reciprocal action, each particular church proceeds from its bishop as from a principle of generation, and the bishop finds in it the manifestation of his priesthood, the effect of his *character*, the fruit of the divine fecundity which comes to him from Christ.

All this is interdependent; and if Horace could say that it were easier to rob Hercules of his club than Homer of one of his verses, it is much more true that the divine Poet, the Word, cannot be despoiled of a single one of those strophes by which He finds active expression in His manhood in its religious embodiment.

Thus the Episcopate considered in its unity, of which the Bishop of Rome is the connecting link, and after that each bishop in his own church, by virtue of the priesthood of Christ which is communicated to him, is the source of the spiritual fecundity which is spread through the whole Church. They are the spouses of that mother who bears them new children from day to day.

Bishop (ἐπισκόπος), means *inspector, overseer,* the *protector* and *warden* who presides in order to serve. But it is evident that in this the name understates the thing. Before inspecting and ruling, the bishop begets; he is a father; for it is indeed to a new life, the life of grace, that we are born by the sacramental action where he is the agent. *Amen,*

[1] St. Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiæ*, II. 6.

amen I say to you, unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John iii. 9).

The Episcopal body is, as it were, the germ of the Church, which is wholly contained in it. The apostolic college, which it succeeds and perpetuates, was the seed of His great *tree* in the mind of Christ. So, in His *sacerdotal prayer,* when He prays for all His own, He prays in the first place for the Twelve, adding afterward, to mark what He expected His work to reap from their activity : *I pray not for these alone; but also for all those who through their word shall believe in Me* (John xvii. 20).

We see clearly enough by these words and by all those used at the institution of the Church that the work of the apostles and their successors was not to be manifold and individual, but collective. *Father, that they may be one, as Thou and I are one.* One in the unity of the Spirit, they will all be but one single principle, acting in the name of Christ, who is one, and of God, who is Unity itself.

Though, then, there are many bishops, there is only one episcopate, as there is only one Church. All these priests endowed with the fulness of priestly power share in the one eternal priesthood. All are "brethren"; the Pope, as Bishop, is but one among them. But because he is at the same time the representative of the Saviour among the Twelve; because he is His vicar now that He has departed, the Pope includes in his powers the powers of all the bishops, as being their source. It is he who gives them such powers, or rather it is as depending on him that they receive them; from him they issue forth. Election and nomination are but accessories; *apostolic institution* is the fundamental thing; it is that which makes the pastor, in union with the supreme Pastor.

It is of course to be understood that the Pope does not himself lose his powers by communicating them; the source does not dry up by flowing. Moreover we have said that the Pope has a direct and *ordinary* authority over all particular churches and over each of the faithful; that the particular *titles* of these churches belong to him in the first place, failing which unity ceases; the entire communion of the Church would no longer be attached to Christ through His representative; Christ would no longer be all to all men, the one bridegroom, in the whole and in every part, of His single bride.

Many consequences arise from the solidarity of the episcopate, notably this, that in certain extraordinary circumstances, as in times of persecution or schism, a simple bishop may be seen to intervene outside the limits of his particular church and to play a universal part, a part which may be interpreted as an act of the communion of bishops, according to their

solidarity as *envoys* of Christ, and consequently as an act emanating from the principle of their communion, the Pope.

Thus, without having recourse to any principle of exception, may be explained what took place in the first ages, when each apostle, playing the part of universal envoy, attributed to himself a general rôle without territorial limitations, instituting bishops and prescribing rules for the whole community. This, it is evident, was a part confined to the beginnings. Had it been maintained, it would have created anarchy later on. But such a rôle was none the less connected with the permanent principles of the religious constitution, and particular only in its application. The reflection of the person of Jesus in each of the Twelve, in whom the faithful found Him anew, gave each general action a very simple procedure.

Apart from these particular cases, bishops, inasmuch as they are part of the body of envoys who collectively represent Christ, have none the less each a universal rôle in the Church. This rôle must even be regarded as anterior to that which they possess in respect to their own particular church, seeing that, before they were accredited to spheres of influence, they were sent to all, and heard the words said to them, in the person of the Twelve: *Go and teach all nations.*

This is what the theologians mean when they say that the *communion* of bishops is anterior to their title. The bishops, all together, form an order, which is called a *communion* when we remember that charity is the bond of the Church. And it is from this episcopal or apostolic communion that there flows, through their spiritual and sacramental paternity, the communion of all the faithful, as a step towards the communion of saints.

A bishop, then, is not the shepherd of a single flock; he is in the first place, together with the other bishops and the Pope, under the authority of the Pope, a shepherd of the Universal Church. That is what is solemnly, though not solely, made manifest by an *ecumenical council.*

In these mighty assemblies, in which the Church's order is so broadly revealed, the unitive intention which creates the religious assembly is proved firstly by this, that the Church assembled in council is like a circle, where every part and every line is drawn around the centre. The Pope is this active centre whence all takes its rise and in which is assured the consistency of the whole. It is ordinarily he who *convokes* and *presides over* the council, and who finally *confirms* its decisions. If he has not actually convoked it, he is deemed to have convoked it from the fact that he confirms the council's action, of which its convocation was the prologue. If he does not personally preside, his representative

in act or in word occupies the central position in his name. We can no more find the Church apart from the Pope than light and air without the sun.

Always, conjointly with the Pope, all the bishops his brethren really sit in council, are in reality the judges of Christian faith and practice. In their decrees they say, as at the first Council at Jerusalem, *It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,* and they all combine in unison to utter the sound which they make men hear. Under the promise of the Spirit which is the Spirit of Christ, as human *envoys* overshadowed by the Divine Spirit, they decide on spiritual matters for the whole Church. They judge in this world *the twelve tribes of Israel,* that is the Catholic Church, in order that through their action she may go forward to her sublime ends.

Thus all the bishops of the world have an inalienable right, a right belonging to their *order* as such, to sit in Councils. They are entitled to a place there without being specially called, as every minister exercises his right of sitting in the council of ministers by the political constitution.

For the same reason all bishops are equal in council, equal, that is, as far as concerns the decisions which are the proper purpose of the council, if not in their preliminary debates. The wisest, the best informed, those who occupy the most important sees, which make them the representatives and witnesses of a more considerable portion of the subject multitudes, exercise without doubt a greater influence on the decisions, but the decisions are not theirs. The WE is uttered in perfect unity and fraternal equality. They say *This is so,* or *Let this be so,* as *Let us make man* was said in Trinity. Their language is in the plural, and so are their actual words, but not their action.

So long as this divinely constituted body keeps to the law of its operation, which makes it a principle; so long as it confines itself to its proper functions, it stands for Christ Himself, it is *one* as is Christ, the multiplicity of its human elements being as it were assumed into the unity which it reflects: *He that heareth* YOU *heareth Me.*

As in certain circumstances, and commonly in the primitive Church, the bishop and the group of his priests (*presbyterium*) together consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ, our *life,* by a single communal action, so here the episcopal body in union with its chief consecrates Christ the *truth,* by marking out the roads of Christian progress, beginning from the doctrines which determine its direction and end.

The equality of which we speak is not, then, a distributive equality, as if each brought his own contribution, or as if the Pope could not do by himself what he does together with the bishops. This law of the sharing of authority, which is that

of most human institutions, has no place in the divine hierarchy, because it has no place in the Trinity from which the hierarchy emanates.

The president of a republic cannot do alone what he can do together with his ministers, nor they alone what they can do together with the parliament, because in this case authority is an integration; the complete principle of action is made up of complementary instances. On the other hand, an absolute monarch can do by himself all that he can do with his counsellors; but that is so because his counsellors have no part in the royal power; they only pave the way for its exercise. In the Church there is a real participation, but a participation in unity, as in unity the Son participates in all that the Father does and does it with Him, although He owes to the Father both His Sonship and His power of sharing in the Father's works; *The Father who dwelleth in Me, it is He that worketh . . . and I also work* (John xiv. 10-17).

The same thread of thought brings us to the understanding of how unity of life in the Church remains perfect, in spite of its division into particular churches and the attribution of a portion of the flock to each bishop.

A particular church or diocese must not be considered merely as an administrative area, nor as a tiny state within the State; they are unities on a substantial basis, like our families, wherein racial unity is communicated and distributed without being destroyed. The *race of the sons of God,* also one in Christ, is disseminated in various families which enrich it and do not divide it, which indeed *are* it, variously manifested, it is true, but in the identity of its essence, and obtaining extensions of themselves from its original fertility.

It follows evidently that this order is unchangeable, a very nature of things, since the supernatural in every degree follows the forms of nature. No particular church is necessary, any more than any particular family. To no single church taken by itself has been promised either continuity nor that doctrinal infallibility which are the privileges of the supernatural race. But in what it is and what it receives are found all the fundamental relations; the communications which have come from Christ, and have their beginning in the Trinity into which He permits us to enter, are perfected in it and are its principle of order, as they are its principle of life.

He that receiveth you receiveth Me, said Christ to the Twelve. The particular church in receiving its bishop receives Christ and His saving priesthood in him. The bishop is its *foundation,* as Christ is the foundation of the Church. And through him it receives the Father; for Jesus added: *And he that receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but my Father who hath sent Me* (Mark ix. 36). Thereby, lastly, it receives

the Spirit, the living Bond of the Father and the Son, the Soul of the universal Church, the consecration of its own participated unity, as well as that of the body of which it is an organ.

The particular church in relation to its bishop is as it were a bride destined to bear him children and to lead the spiritual life in common with him. This beautiful simile, which begins with St. Paul, is ceaselessly recurring in the speech of the Church. But by means of the unity of the episcopate, in which the unity of the Church is found, these mystic spousals enter as a particular case into the general case of the universal Church united to her Saviour. The sacrament of our union with God is there in its entirety, because the fulness of the priesthood resides in the bishop, and it is through that priesthood that each church shares together with its members in the divine adoption.

Moreover, as through love there arises a mutual compenetration of souls, by reason of which it has been said that the lover is in the beloved and the beloved in the lover, so through organised charity in the Church there arises between the mystic bride and bridegroom, between Christ and religious humanity, between the bishop and his particular family a kind of mutual identity by unitive compenetration, as in the Trinity the Father and the Son are but One in the Spirit of love.

He that seeth Me seeth My Father, said Christ; *for I am in the Father and the Father in Me* (John xiv. 10). Likewise, he that sees the Church sees Christ; he that sees the Pope sees the Church (*Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*); he that sees the bishop sees his particular church, the whole with its complement.

Is it not for this reason that the Church, conscious of the mysteries she holds within her, continues to provide titular bishops for dead churches as if to preserve a life for them in the pastor that she gives them, a legal life that is also an actual life; a life which may find its subject-matter once more, since its germ lives on, its torch is not extinguished. Suppose that, by some accident of history, one of these sees be suddenly revived, its titular may be transferred to it and its life may be taken up again as of old.

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The bishop, on his side, exercises in his church the triple prerogative which we have already seen to belong to the hierarchy taken as a whole: *teaching, priestly ministry,* and *government.* All this he does in the unity of the episcopate united to Peter, whereof he is one of the members; but by a particular *title,* which is recognised by the Church.

From the point of view of *teaching* (*magisterium*), he is in his own church the master of doctrine, and that is his primary

office, even as faith, implicit or explicit, is the first act of the Christian's supernatural life. The bishop is a teacher before he is a pastor; for in order to become a pastor it is necessary that he be given to the flock by virtue of their free adhesion to him in the faith. This order, which was found at the first preaching of the Gospel, has been maintained since by the natural relations of things.

The bishop receives from Christ, for his church, in virtue of the mission which he holds in common with others, the *word of life*. His own faith is a teaching faith, as that of his faithful is a taught faith. Those who adhere to him, as he communicates to them the *deposit*, will be *in the mind of God*, as the powerful formula traced by Ignatius of Antioch puts it. "I have desired to exhort you," he says, "to be of one accord in the mind of God. For if Jesus Christ, who is inseparable from our life, is in the mind of the Father; so also the bishops, in the regions of the earth which they govern, are in the mind of the Father. It is meet therefore that you should be all one in the mind of the bishop."[1]

By reason of this magisterium, the bishop has charge of preaching in his diocese, and must provide for it; of the instruction of children and adults, of theoretical and practical Christian doctrine, of propaganda and printing, the higher direction of which remains in his hands, although he cannot always be the immediate and directly responsible overseer of such things. If any unusual occurrence happens, if special devotions are introduced, it is for him, saving the rights of the Holy See, to judge on such matters, and to determine the conduct of Christians in regard to them.

For all this he does not enjoy personal infallibility, although, as we have said above, he has a share in the infallibility of the Church, as a member of the collective authority. But this share is only effective on the conditions laid down for common action.

From the point of view of *priesthood* (*ministerium*), the *power of order* confers on the bishop the right of administering all the sacraments, including Holy Order and Confirmation, which are his special prerogative, all the sacramentals, all liturgical acts, all that is a divinely instituted or ratified means of sanctification directed to the perfection of religious life. In fact, the complete religious life of any particular church, a perfect image of the universal Church, is the counterpart of the full sacerdocy.

In this matter every bishop is in complete equality with all his brethren. The Pope himself, from the sacramental point of view, is but a bishop among bishops. The character of representative of Christ as priest, which is imperfect in the

[1] Ep. ad Ephes. iii.

inferior clergy, is complete in the bishop and extends to all his functions. This is emphasised by certain details of the liturgy, as at the Mass, before the *collects,* when in place of the formula *Dominus vobiscum* which the simple priest uses, *The Lord be with you,* the bishop says *Pax vobis, Peace be with you,* a formula which was made use of by the Saviour Himself. Here we find the idea that the bishop is the head of his church, its source of peace and spiritual life, even as Christ in Himself and through His Vicar is the head of the Church universal.

Hence the bishop has to keep watch in his diocese, as the principal minister, over the administration of the sacraments, especially of the principal sacrament, the Eucharist. Indeed, the mystery of the Cross and of incorporation with Christ the Saviour of mankind find their real representation in Mass and Communion as they find their hierarchical instrument in the Episcopate. This, then, is the central rite and the first care which in each diocese as in the whole Church makes all turn to itself. Pontifical Mass, with the whole group of assistant priests and ministers, with the assembled faithful, is the best image as well as the principal act of the complete religious activity of a Church.

Hence also the bishop is foremost in prayer, an *intercessor* with and for his people, communicating to God the requests of them all in union with them all. Hence comes his part in the establishment and the performance of the liturgy or public prayer, which without interruption even when the faithful are absent treats of their interests and supplies their place. "Every church," says St. Ignatius of Antioch, "is a lyre; in it the priests and the faithful are united to each other like the strings to the wood of an instrument which gathers them together, and in this union of souls and voices, on the lyre of the Church, the Holy Spirit sings of Jesus Christ."[1]

In respect of government (*imperium*), the bishop shares in what we call, in a spiritual sense, the kingship of Christ, which is manifested, like every government, in the threefold authority: *legislative, judicial, and executive.*

He can make laws, subject to the general laws of the Church. He adds to them such rules of public administration as are necessary for their application. He can also add, either at his pastoral visitations or otherwise, particular ordinances. And the laws which he makes are valid even under his successor until they are abrogated by an authority equal to or higher than himself.

He is the *judge* of his people in spiritual matters; and so he can call delinquents to his tribunal and pass sentence on them, applying punishments if necessary.

[1] Ep. ad Ephes. ii. 4.

He ought, however, to remember, as the Council of Trent forcibly said, that he is a *shepherd* and not a *striker* (*Pastores, non percussores*); and that therefore he ought to treat the faithful confided to him as children, as brethren, not as subjects to be domineered over. To convince and beseech in the first place, to reprove in the second, is the order St. Paul emphasises (*argue, obsecra, increpa*—2 Tim. iv. 2). If he has to reprove, he must do it in all kindness and patience (*in omni bonitate et patientia*) "so that without bitterness, salutary and necessary discipline may be preserved among the people."[1]

In order to exercise his judgement with harmony and wisdom, the bishop convokes at regular intervals a *diocesan synod,* that is an assembly of his priests and clerics, either in their full strength or a selection of them, charged to give him information and counsel on all the matters that depend on his charge. Thus his government will be more competent and better fitted to his flock, the promulgation of his legal enactments more solemn, and in those cases in which they impose penalties or are unexpected they will be less liable to the charge of being arbitrary.

The bishop has likewise a permanent assistance from what is called his *chapter,* a sort of religious senate which takes charge of the Offices in the Cathedral Church, shares in the government of the diocese, and takes the bishop's place in the event of a vacancy of the see.

Of old the bishop had lieutenants in the form of *archdeacons,* who had considerable powers, so that they were called "the bishop's hand and eye." But this title has become almost everywhere purely honorary, and its duties have become confounded with those of the *vicars general.* Thus are those officials called who exercise in the bishop's name or as responsible to him a general jurisdiction of order, whether voluntary or disputed. In the latter case the competent vicar general takes the name *official.* Temporary or local vicars, whose work in France is done almost always by *archpriests* or *deans,* complete this organisation of episcopal power and act as its instruments.

Besides these things, the holding of *particular councils,* ordinary or extraordinary, provincial or national, which in the great body of the Church are as it were special functions subordinate to the great general function of life, assists in another way, and that from above, in the bishop's government. He is bound thereby to the common order, as just now we saw him to be to his flock. The impression of these meetings, which are an image of the Church in little, hovers over the clergy and the mass of the faithful, strengthening the Catholic sense in each and all. It must also strengthen

[1] Council of Trent, sess. xxiv.

the impression of charity, if the assembled bishops keep the sense of their office always before their eyes in the same way as they do individually.

Indeed, this character of harmony and goodness attached to the episcopal power is no accident; it arises from its origin and special nature. The bishop is only chief because he is shepherd, and in order to be shepherd. He "who gives his life for his sheep"—for such is his law, if it be necessary—is not going to tyrannise over them! It is only to defend the life of which he is the spiritual giver, as father of souls, that the bishop is vested with all his powers.

Lastly, the bishop is an *administrator*. Things and persons in his spiritual flock are the subjects of his action conformably to the laws of the Church, to particular agreements and to civil laws recognised by the Church. And this is so because his subjects are also subjects of the State, and cannot be snatched from the jurisdiction of one to the advantage of the other. *Each society is sovereign in its own order,* said Leo XIII.; *utraque in suo genere maxima.*[1]

Consequently, all the offices and charges that the administration of a diocese presupposes are dependent on the bishop. He is their dispenser, their guardian and their judge, though with appeal to a higher authority. He has to extend his vigilance to possessions, which are the means or the matter of works.

In short, in all respects the bishop is the centre of life in whom all converges, even as all begins from him.

But in all things also the bishop is the dependent of the Pope, who can, for reasons of which he himself is the sole judge, restrict, extend, suspend or suppress the legitimate exercise of the former's rights. That is why, although we have said: In principle and as far as concerns their *order,* as principally manifested in Council, all bishops are equal, yet it belongs to the Pope to communicate to some rather than others some part of his principate for the better administration of the Church. This, while involving no alteration of the essence of the hierarchy, will enrich and renovate the resources of government in the empire of souls. So in the body some more important nerve-centres exercise in dependence on the brain some of its functions.

Hence arise *Patriarchs* and *metropolitans, primates, patriarchal delegations, legates, vicars apostolic,* etc., which are in no wise a cause of dispersion of the central authority, nor a check in the return of life to the centre, but rather a useful stage in that return.

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By reason always of the unity which holds together the

[1] Encyclical *Libertas.*

whole episcopal body; by reason of the unity of the mission entrusted to the Twelve by the divine Master, the particular action of the bishop does not have its whole result in his own diocese; it has a general bearing. The autonomy of each pastor in the midst of his flock is more visible, but not more real, than the mystic unity of the whole body.

The scattered bishops, by means of their union with each other and with the Holy See, form a kind of permanent spiritual council. The reciprocal life which circulates between the centre and the circumference, and even laterally, from see to see, resembles what goes on in a healthy organism, in which the parts are not confounded, the parts are not equal, but all are reciprocal.

The laws which are made in this place or that, the customs which arise, confirmed by authority and experience, contribute to the formation and perfection of general laws and customs. The holiness which springs from them becomes a common stock. What we have said as to the part that the governed play in the Church's government is much more true of those governing subjects, the bishops. If the Pope " strengthens his brethren " in the assistance they render him, this assistance is none the less actual. In doctrine, in discipline, in liturgy, in everything, the subordinate action of the bishops is one of the means of life of which the Holy See is the centre, of which Christ and His divine Spirit are the driving forces.

Lastly, is not this the place to recall the fundamental remark which we made in relation to the sacrament of Order?

In the Church the mystical point of view always dominates from a far higher standpoint the administrative point of view, the latter being a means, the former an end. So that in the administration itself, when it is religious, the scale of offices ought to correspond in principle with the scale of vital values.

It follows that the bishop, placed at the head of the hierarchy in his particular church, and at the head of the whole Church in the communion of his brethren the other bishops, is from this very fact engaged in a state of perfection; for that which is supreme ought to be perfect, in an order of things whose purpose is sanctification.

The bishop, who is charged with the most sacred of acts of religion, who is in that respect equal to the Pope himself, who applies himself to the greatest of duties which have all a mystical import, is called to a state of life which corresponds to the divine call. Of the three states that theologians distinguish, that of *beginners*, of *progressives* and of the *perfect*—it being understood that the last term is used to apply to those who are striving after and actually going towards perfection, not that they have reached it—it is to the last that the bishop is invited to belong. At the time of his consecra-

tion he makes perpetual and public profession of it; he has to prove it by his actions.

The sacraments, which the pastor administers and which are in his charge, sanctify, as we have said, the channels through which they pass. Are not these channels living ones, and ought not they to be conscious, for themselves as for all, of the value of what they impart? Are not they clients also? They, then, should partake more than anyone of the sanctifying effects, since they are the first to have full powers for sanctifying others.

The fulness of the priesthood corresponds normally to the fulness of faith and love. The power of imparting the Holy Spirit implies normally a personal possession of that Spirit in an eminent degree.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIESTLY ORDER

IT *is not good that man should be alone,* said Jehovah in the Bible; *let us make him an helpmeet for him.*

These words might be applied to the bishop, and to the episcopate generally.

It would not be good for the episcopate to be alone, without sharing its fulness of priesthood. The hierarchy would in such an event be impoverished; and also in a certain manner depreciated, in that if the principal and the accessory, the great and the small were not distinguished, the whole would be reduced to the level of those secondary duties which from day to day the bishop would be called upon to perform.

Moreover, such isolation would be a very distant imitation of the harmony of the works of Providence; for God has given His creatures not only being, but the power of communicating being; not only fecundity, but the power of communicating that fecundity. And thus it is in conformity with God's creative and *recreative* purposes that the bishop should communicate to his assistants the fruitfulness of his priesthood, as Christ communicated His to the Church in the person of the bishops, and as God has communicated His to His Son.

The *helpmeet for him* of whom the Bible speaks is in the case of the bishop his own Church, since the assistants with whom he provides himself are drawn from her bosom. She is the spouse, as we said above; and it is chiefly through the order of priesthood that she becomes a mother.

Thus the hierarchy will be enriched and widened, and the life which emanates from the divine springs and passes through Christ and the body of bishops will reach the Christian people through the priesthood, keeping its single unity rooted in the unity of the Father and the Son.

And there, moreover, stops the hierarchy properly so called, which cannot be broken up indefinitely to transmit itself through more and more grades. The priest receives the priesthood and does not pass it on; he is the consecrated, not a consecrator. Likewise, he is not a chief in the hierarchy. No priest is a chief except the complete priest who is clothed with the pontificate. Each particular church has a " senate " —as a little while ago we called the *presbyterium* or assembly of priests encircling the bishop; but it has no head other than the bishop himself. Be he parish priest or vicar-general, none has the right to be called a head. It is true that the priests of every rank have a share in the principality that is conferred on their chief. They have a share in it, but they do not divide it or multiply it; they are partakers of the single

fruitfulness which is bestowed upon the hierarchical body, consecrated for that purpose.

Likewise there are below the priests ministers of inferior rank. At all times there have been *deacons;* for many ages there have been *sub-deacons* and clerics vested with *minor orders.* All these have a ministerial function in regard to the priesthood; they are witnesses and servants of the mysteries, occasional delegates from the clergy to the faithful, to prepare for them and to preserve the bond between them and the priesthood. But in reality it is about the episcopate that they are ranked. They are the helpers of the complete priest, the bishop, and only after that of the simple priests who assist him. It is in order to be of help to the former that they put themselves at the disposition of the latter.[1]

Thus once more is revealed the essential dependence of every priest on the bishop, whose prerogatives and authority he shares in perfect unity with him. The priest is associated in the three rôles mentioned above, instruction, sacramental ministry and the threefold government (legislative, judicial and executive), and acts in all of them in a supplementary manner. He preaches and teaches in the bishop's name; he baptises in order to give sons to the bishop, who at their confirmation will receive them at his hands; he celebrates at the altar, either jointly with the bishop, or separately, but always in unity with him, administering the Body of Christ with him, as he distributes His truth and shares in His Kingdom. The bishop's hand is in all that is done in his diocese, and it is he in the first place who does it. And so there is perfect unity in the local as in the universal Church.

Granted that the character of the priesthood as found in the simple priest is incomplete, its very dependence has its greatness; for it allows him a share as participant in the dignity of which he partakes. As St. John Chrysostom said in this connection, "I know not what the priest has less than the bishop, except that he receives it from the bishop."[2] So in the Trinity the Son has all that the Father has except being the Father.

As for that, priests also, in spite of their lesser rank, are successors of the apostles. To them also was it said: *Go and teach all nations; Do this for a memorial of Me; and Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven.*

[1] All the ministerial offices of which we are speaking are derived from the diaconate, the only one which existed at the start. They must therefore be considered as subdivisions derived from the Church's authority; they do not belong to her first institution. In their case there is an organic differentiation having its rise in the episcopate, as we have seen a differentiation in the episcopate having its rise in the Holy See.

[2] Hom. II. in 1 Tim., chap. iii.

Whether by derivation or of right, the unique authority which is derived is exercised in the same way none the less.

This glorifying unity of the clergy with their bishop in each church had of old time a moving symbol which even now has not entirely perished. On the greater and more solemn days the whole *presbyterium* surrounded the bishop and celebrated together with him in the presence of the people. In common they said: *This is My Body, this is My Blood,* and all the faithful, sharing and communicating in the mysteries, had under their eyes, in their hearts, through their feelings, the vision and impression of the mystic unity, the divine hierarchy of which the sacrificed Lamb is the centre, and which was there, if one may venture to say so, in His action, exercising His eternal priesthood.

In spite of this unity between clergy and bishop, which is of itself a source of equality between all priests, there are various grades among the latter. But in reality it is the very unity of which we are speaking which accounts for this, since without it the various functions of the episcopate would not be fulfilled.

The necessities of religious administration, then, have caused an order and division of functions to be established among the members of the priesthood, who though as such they are brothers, none the less have a hierarchy of duties. And hence arose the ancient institution of *cardinal priests,* whose fortune rose so high in spite of all changes; hence too that of ecclesiastical *titles* with cure of souls, which originated parishes and collegiate churches. Hence also the various rôles of economist, penitentiary, provost, dean, schoolmaster, etc., which have in the course of ages been subject to great variations. And hence also arose the creation of little churches without episcopal title, but dependent on a bishop, and forming, in varied combinations, those religious areas which are to-day called dioceses.[1]

To mark better the unity which persists through these divisions, customs were established which presented other advantages. Such were the *stations,* or assemblies organised by the bishop in the various churches of his area in turn, to which his throne was removed one after another. To-day pastoral visitations achieve the same results.

* * * * *

We come thus to the consideration of parishes and their titulars; for these constitute the actual form of the clergy's co-operation in the bishop's pastoral mission.

The word *curé*[2] (*curatus,* one who is in charge, that is of

[1] In the language of antiquity, the word diocese (*διοίκησις*) was the name of an administrative division belonging rather to the civil order.

[2] The word *curé* is not exactly translatable into English. Its nearest equivalent is our *parish priest,* or priest having the *cure* of souls.—TRANSLATOR.

the Parish, from the Latin word *parochus*) does not belong to the primitive language of the Church. The *parish* originally meant what we now call the diocese, or a part of it.

There were no curés properly so called before the fourth century, for the reason that the Christian flock, small as it then was, did not yet require this subdivision of the churches. All the faithful were grouped about the bishop and celebrated the sacred liturgy with him, whether they formed part of the town or came from the surrounding country. The bishop was properly speaking the curé (*curatus*) of the whole diocese, with the assistance of his priests, be it understood, but in such wise that none of the latter had the exclusive and perpetual care of a particular group of the faithful.

This does not mean that there were no churches other than the Cathedral Church; but in them there was nothing but prayer; neither the holy Mass nor preaching took place in them, for it was preferred that these things should be confined to the place where the bishop's seat was fixed.[1]

Naturally it was in the country districts that the need of an extension of this system first made itself felt; and there in the fourth century it began. We must wait until after the year 1000 before we find a regular system of parish organisation in the episcopal cities.

In Gaul the zeal of St. Martin did much for the beginnings of the parochial movement. This saint, who, when a catechumen, divided his military cloak in order to give half of it to a beggar, divided his episcopal mantle in order to cover therewith the religious nakedness of his children. All along the Roman roads, starting from his own city, he established parochial centres which flourished and became models for others.

It soon happened that the rural proprietors, either through interest or zeal, contributed to these religious foundations, which, by affording facilities for the exercise of religion, tended to settle the inhabitants and to attract new ones. But it was above all the monks, who, beginning in the fifth century, clearing and civilising the land, opening Gaul to civil as to religious life, hunting the wolves and making room for the Lamb of God, created the network of French parishes.

We see hereby that charges with the cure of souls are not of either Apostolic or Divine institution; they arose in the Church as a necessity for her development. The parish priests do not form a third order in a hierarchy which has the Pope and the bishops for its higher ranks. A curé has no jurisdiction in the proper sense, at least by reason of his charge. He is neither legislator nor judge, nor has he any independent executive power. All these qualities appertain to the bishop.

The curé, then, is not, properly speaking, a pastor, which

[1] The word *cathedral*, indeed, is derived from *seat: cathedra*.

word implies a personal jurisdiction. The pastors of peoples are their kings, their chiefs endowed with the triple prerogative into which social authority expands. The pastors of the Gospel, then, are those who possess like powers in spiritual things.

But nothing prevents us from applying to them the name pastor in a less precise sense. It is fitting so to address the head of a religious family, as the curé is, without prejudice to the verbal precautions which Jansenist and Gallican errors impose on theologians.

The functions of the curé are as follows. He is charged in the first place with procuring the good of souls in his parish by the word of God and the administration of the sacraments. Not that he is obliged to assume in his own person the whole task of instruction and edification; but he ought to assume it in part, and for the rest he must watch over it. So that if anyone speaks, teaches or administers the sacraments in his church, even though such a one hold the powers of a bishop, he is nevertheless in a way the curé's substitute, inasmuch as the latter has received special charge in these matters.

From this we may easily see what the curé is in spiritual matters and what he is not. The fact that the curate or the temporary priest receive their powers from the bishop proves that there is no communication of the pastoral office from the latter to the curé. But yet the fact that the curé has a responsibility in the matter proves that he is really *curatus,* one who is in charge.

The curé has to watch over public prayer and himself celebrate Mass for his people. He must organise religious instruction, cherish and forward good Christian life, visit the sick, comfort them, and help them to make use of their sufferings for a Christian end. He must concern himself with the poor and with all forms of activity in general, organising charity and appealing to the richer of his parishioners to supply the wants of the others. He must administer, with such co-operation as is determined by law or by wise custom, the property that is set aside for purposes of worship or charity. He must keep in good order and adorn the church, his "spouse"; but must above all watch over that spiritual spouse, the community confided to his care, exhorting *in season and out of season,* as the Apostle says, giving warning of dangers, denouncing open faults. In certain cases he may dispense from the laws of the Church at his discretion. He names his assistants with the approval of the bishop; that at least is his ordinary right, though in France necessity has disposed otherwise.

The parishioners, in return, ought to listen to the instruc-

tions of their parish priest, accept his paternal care, receive the sacraments from him or his deputies, so far as law and custom determine. They ought to supply with ready heart what is needed for his works of public interest and charity, works which concern themselves, since they concern their own persons, their children, their religious objects, the poor. Are not those in each parish specially our brothers who have need of help, religious aid, instruction and comfort?

But before all the parishioners fulfil their duty if they are good Christians, giving satisfaction to the curé in his very *raison d'être*. He is there for them, not for himself; it is their soul which is his care, and their Christian life which is his work. To be present at the offices, to give of one's property or even one's self to outside needs, is not enough. The house of God is empty when only bodies are there, and the parish also is empty if there are in it only worthy people civil to their priest, regular at his offices, generous in response to his demands on them, but all the same given up to vanity or overcome by evil. Souls ! souls ! the apostles cry, and the curé is a resident apostle, a conqueror of the inner life for the good of the conquered.

At certain epochs in the past, parochial life had an intensity such as we can hardly imagine now. The word *family* was not too strong to express the union which ordinarily existed between a pastor, the offspring of the locality, supported exclusively by his parishioners, living their life, sharing their thought as a preliminary to the endeavour to direct it towards Christ, attached, in those days when communication was so difficult, to nothing that could distract him from his duty.

The bonds between such a pastor and his flock, who found in the church all that they needed; firstly the church itself—and we well know how great was the attachment of the faithful to that—and moreover a forum, a town hall, a market, a meeting-place for confraternities, a theatre for mystery-plays and liturgical drama; in time of need a storehouse for corn or furniture, and in time of war a fortress—such bonds must indeed have been strong !

Such an accumulation of purposes was not without its inconveniences; but at least it nourished that common life by which the Church sets so much store. In his sermons the parish priest did not consider himself forbidden to deal with civil affairs after he had treated of religious ones. His opinion was of weight, for he took part in all the community's decisions with a preponderating voice; he uttered that opinion; in the name of morals he solved many material or administrative questions. The whole of the life of the parish was there considered, judged and disposed of with fatherly admonitions,

sometimes severe, but nearly always well received, if not obeyed.

At the offices the kind of respectful but rather inert passivity which we meet with to-day would have very much astonished our ancestors. The Church was a place for acting, for carrying on a drama: δρᾶμα, a *thing done*. The people, book in hand, or rather with their memories well stored from infancy, took an interest in all the liturgical ceremonies. They sang, they walked in procession, and if perchance a strange preacher made his appearance, they listened to long addresses, varied but familiar, which lasted sometimes for hours. Eleven o'clock masses were unknown, and so were fifteen minute sermons. They loved all that the parish procured for them and stood for in their eyes. They brought it faith, they drew from it courage and gentleness.

With this medium so close to the facts of life, the power of the Church got home; it reached the little familiar details of existence, where good and evil abide, where the Kingdom of God is established or destroyed. What did it matter then that Rome was far away, and the bishop a fleeting vision of greatness?

Napoleon dreamed of effecting a wholesale "moral revolution" in France by means of the parish priests. He dreamt of a priest on the old lines; independent and respected, "well fitted, by the high function which he meant to assure him, to increase the intelligence of the community," "the natural magistrate" among his parishioners, "a true moral leader of their conduct," and, thanks to his practical knowledge and merited influence, a real "providence for his sheep."[1]

This was a great vision; but it came too late in time to be new. The *country parson,* on whom so much verse was written in the Romantic epoch, that ideal being of whom even a Lacordaire could dream, was not so foreign to reality. He was indeed not far from being in former times the general rule, and it is not for nothing that in the French tongue, in which long-standing customs are so often found reflected, the love of one's native soil—the love, that is, of the little local fatherland—is called *amour du clocher.*

The belfries of France were, and in many cases still are, the communes of France. The council-house, the school, are the first houses of the village; the church is the house that cannot be classified, the house between earth and heaven, the house of the body and the feelings, for the life of every day and for the great aspirations that know nothing of time. Births, marriages and deaths, the three guide-marks of existence to which all is directed, themselves are directed towards the belfry; the belfry dominates them all, draws them to itself and gives them its help.

[1] *Commentaires de Napoléon Ier*, vol. v., p. 409.

But the belfry is a living thing; living firstly in God, who dwells under its summit; but living also in the pastor who dwells in its shadow. The cock who turns high up in all directions stands for the Father's sleepless vigilance; the bell with its great waves of sound or its tiny jingle is his voice echoing the voice of God. The Cross in the cemetery near at hand is his last blessing; those by the roadside and in the houses, on cradle or breast, on the tool, on the very morsel of bread, is the hearty and solemn Yes which with his Master he says to Life, to all life, which he desires to see joyous, glad, but also thoughtful and sanctified, having another life in view.

The curé it is who receives, who unites, who consoles and bids Godspeed to those who pass so speedily through existence. At every stage he marks what in each of them is strong or weak, good or evil. He easily obtains the confidence of the sorrowful, gladly welcomes that of the happy. Inclinations, desires, intimacies, enmities, successes and sins, there are indeed few of these unknown to him, and sooner or later those few will be made known to him in the Confessional.

He is everywhere as soon as he is wanted, near or far, by night or day, in heat or cold, with the great or small. He is the appointed healer of discords, the consoler in suffering, the redresser of open wrongs and the witness of happy events.

To-day, almost everywhere in France, as has become the case elsewhere in the cities, the bonds are somewhat relaxed; our life has become more complex, more dispersed; but the spiritual unity remains, and all may yet be reborn. Those who have striven so long to make a breach in this magistracy of souls, have committed, perhaps without knowing it, a crime against souls as well as against their country and God.

It goes without saying that in speaking specially of France, and even so particularly of the country districts, we have not meant to do so exclusively. In a town the part played by the parish priest is very complicated and necessarily subdivided. The law of increasing differentiation on the part of organisms in evolution applies to the parish. The parish priest is no longer everything; curates with definite functions, in ordered ranks, form a kind of secondary *presbyterium* about him. None the less he remains chief, in the non-canonical sense we have explained.

The more value, the more zeal, the more power of attraction and devotion he has, the more he holds the reins. Parochial undertakings of every kind, catechisms in various grades, schools, benevolent societies, confraternities, propaganda, social work spreading ever more and more, works of zeal whose effects reach sometimes to foreign lands, to mission countries, to Rome, to the colonies to which his parishioners

emigrate, demand his attention and application, and sometimes formidable financial duties weigh upon him.

The French *Law of Separation,* which some thought would be the death of the parishes, has greatly increased their importance, and yet this movement has hardly begun. As the Christian revival which is noticeable on all hands develops, our parishes will be reborn to a freer and therefore a deeper life; their numbers will multiply, and so they will be more fitted to regain the people.

And so, throughout the whole world, in spite of very great variations rendered necessary by differing circumstances and surroundings, the fundamental part played by the parish priest is everywhere the same. In all places the parish may be called, to use an expression dear to sociologists, the *social cell* of the Church, as the family is of the temporal sphere. It is its "tactical unit,"[1] though not its mystical and hierarchical unit in the proper sense, which is the diocese.

The author we have quoted adds profoundly that "the Catholic parish is easily discernible, in virtue of certain fundamental characters, from the non-Catholic parish, however close to it the latter may be in appearance, whether it be the parish of the schismatic Greek or Russian, of the Dutch Jansenist, of the Swiss Old Catholic or of the Anglican Ritualist who calls himself a Catholic and copies all the usages of the Church, but remains separated from its head." And the reason for this is indicated exactly in the last phrase. The religious bond is uninterrupted from the parishioner to the Head of the universal Church, by way of the Bishop; influences circulate which give to the life of each little society a completeness which comes to it from the great life to which it is attached. Has the separate twig which vegetates, drinks in a little dew from the ground in an attempt to shoot, the appearance of the twig holding to its branch, the branch issuing from the trunk, which drinks up its food through the roots, while the whole shoots up to heaven?

It is but natural, then, that the Catholic parish should be of a special character and the same everywhere.

The Church's constitution is supple; but the type of each of its organs is very quickly fixed, even when it is not settled by original institution. All evolves in accordance with laws which are dictated by the fundamental nature of things, of which God is the founder, and subsequently the restorer through Christ. This organisation, which has the same work to perform, a work human and divine, can only gravitate around fixed points, which are determined jointly by human nature, which is seen in its fundamental principles therein, and the unchanging immobility of God.

[1] *Cf.* Lesêtre, *La Paroisse,* p. 233.

CHAPTER IX

THE MONASTIC ORDER

THE Church, local Churches, parishes: these are the successive zones wherein Catholic religious life is called upon to unfold and reveal its supple and single organisation.

In turning to the monastic order, we are no longer dealing with a particular field of the Church's action, nor yet with a degree of the hierarchy; but with a deepening of the religious life, and with the various forms used to extend its resources, to the direct advantage of higher souls and the indirect benefit of the whole Church.

As an organ of the Church, the monastic order is collective in essence like the Church herself. We have pointed out often enough already that in an organisation of love, such as Catholicism is, there is no room for an isolated search after salvation, and even less for solitary perfection. All is bound together in God through Christ, each soul is bound to all the others, and each band is only a company, a regiment, a brigade, a division, or a special formation in the complete army.

We must apply in the first place to the Church as a whole what St. Benedict said of his work, when he called it a school of God's service (*Dominici schola servitii*). The particular "schools" all operate in the Spirit of the Church, under her guidance and for her ends, which are general as well as personal to each son of God.

Whether we consider *anchorites,* men who live apart from mankind, in secluded retreat, or even in the desert, as did the hermits, or whether we take the case of the *cenobites,* monks who live in community, as do the Benedictines, or, again, the *canons regular,* of whom there were many in the first centuries, or the *friars,* of whom the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Minims are the largest families, or the *regular clerks,* with their most famous division, the Society of Jesus, or lastly *secular clerks* living in community, with or without vows, like the disciples of St. Alphonsus Liguori or of St. Paul of the Cross, the Priests of the Mission, the Oblates of every kind, the Oratorians, etc. . . . in all of these cases, the order under consideration is only an application of Catholic thought, an outgrowth of its organisation, and consequently a social thing.

This is all the more so when it happens that a monastic centre is erected into a particular Church, with a prelate belonging to the episcopal order, or at least under the direction of clerics belonging to the hierarchy and ruling the society of monks or nuns in its name.

Monastic churches were numerous and flourishing in the fourth century, and perhaps even before. Their chiefs, in the case of communities of men, were soon drawn almost exclusively from their own ranks, so that there was complete homogeneity between the society considered as belonging to the monastic order and the same in its place in the hierarchical order.

It thus generally happened that these particular churches, being generally more fervent, better supplied with personnel, and more influential, widened their field of action and saw secular populations come under their care, the monks being their clergy, the abbot or prior their pastor with cure of souls. When the superior was a bishop, he had a true diocese around him; when he was not, he became an archpriest in the ancient sense of the word, like the *cardinalitial titles* of diocesan churches, and took part in all the acts of the ecclesiastical life which emanated from him. In this apparent confusion, the distinction between the *monastic* and the hierarchic or *canonical* orders continued none the less.

Later on, the foundation of the great apostolic orders issued from a general system of thought which attached these groups more directly to the Holy See, without prejudice to the indispensable bonds connecting them with the particular churches in which they spread. And this was an even more evident demonstration of the social character with which the monastic order is endowed.

It remains for us to estimate the value which these creations have for the Church, and to that end to define the religious state in itself.

The religious state is, properly speaking, a public profession of what is in its perfection the Church's own very work, namely holiness, which is characterised by charity; adhesion to God and to all that is God's, especially one's human neighbour, and an accompanying laying aside of all that is really foreign or hostile to Him, particularly the selfish and sinful ego.

We must avoid two possible mistakes in this definition. The outward profession of perfection here involved does not imply the attainment, but the determined quest of perfection. And again, when we say "outward profession," we mean that the inward may be separated from it. There are religious who are scarcely perfect; there are simple Christians who advance heroically along this royal road. The latter have the soul of the religious life without belonging to its body; the former have the body without the soul.

But it is important to make it clear that this soul of the religious life is the soul of the Church herself, and in no wise a special thing. What is special is the external and public

profession. And such a profession, precisely because it is public, that is, sanctioned by and included in the Christian unity, makes him who professes a representative. The whole Church declares her aims in him, as the hero declares the army's wish, victory.

The whole Church has holiness for end; this is her proper work. That is why the Church is called *Holy*. We have also said that the Episcopate, the highest representative of the Church from the mystic point of view, is in itself a state of perfection, and calls to actual perfection every one who receives episcopal consecration. In the present case the representation is spontaneous, not hierarchic, but it is sanctioned and thereby also *canonical* in its own way. The cases, then, are radically identical.

Hereby we see the great error of the "moderns" who maintain that religious profession is an out-of-date institution, and that it would be in the Church's interest for her to disembarrass herself of it as an encumbering accessory. The institution of the religious life is by no means an accessory; it is connected with the Church's fundamental sanctity; it reveals the best, the highest achievement of the Church, in agreement with the principle that is its starting-point. If there were no religious, there would be a relative check to the sanctifying work which has been undertaken; for all that is undertaken tends towards achievement and must be able to show evidence of it. A theologian has very well said that "the religious state is so far of the essence of the Church that it naturally began with her, or rather she began with it."[1]

The religious, then, merely carries out the natural sequence of his baptism and carries out all its consequences to the end. Every baptised person makes profession of giving himself to God by means of Christ and of renouncing all that opposes or ignores Him. The religious can propose nothing more to himself; he only proposes to do this better than it is done ordinarily, to do it more fully, and to use means which are better adapted to the end.

And the difference that constitutes degrees in this matter is that the simple baptised person can confine himself to the precepts, the fulfilling of which is the proof of essential charity; whereas the religious makes profession of the *counsels,* of those at least which are the matter of the three vows; detachment from the goods of this world by means of *poverty,* renunciation of the flesh by *chastity,* abandonment of his own will by *obedience.*

In the life eternal, will not all things be common? will not the works of the flesh be absent? will not loving adhesion to the divine will be the law? The religious life is an attempt

[1] Dom Gréa, *L'Église et sa divine constitution*, p. 428.

at and an anticipation of this order of ends, as it is a continuation and a perfecting of baptism.

Every Christian, at death, makes his religious profession; neither his goods, nor his flesh, nor his own will matter to him any more; he is lost in God; he descends into the tomb with Jesus that he may rise again with Him, and this is what baptismal immersion signifies.

Life in God, whose riches lie in having nothing and in being all, will be the reward of whoever is willing to be cut off by death from the transient. Life in God, in whom is perfect and changeless life, will be given to him who withdraws from that ever-dying life which is sustained by food and reproduction. Life in God, the Ruler of all beings, will associate with His ever-obeyed Providence him who finally renounces willing in accordance with his own will, who with Jesus renders up his spirit into the hands of the Father. In that greater life he will be a consentor to the divine programme that he will then see displayed, an actor in the drama of the universe, precisely because he has renounced the personal "comedy," by agreeing that it should end with the "tragic act."

The religious forestalls this moment and wills to die spiritually, as Jesus did from His first hour, as all His *chosen* have done, beginning with the Twelve. Henceforth nothing will count for him but God, but what is enlightened by the light of God; all the rest will be but objects in the darkness; he himself, in that part of him to which God does not give life, will be no more than a corpse.

All this the religious *vows,* that is, he makes of it a *state* instead of a temporary function; he means to extend the Christian perfection he has professed to cover the whole of the Christian life; he attempts to imitate in time that confirmation in good which is the achievement of eternity; he means to guarantee his fidelity, and to add to the value of his gifts that of their permanence and their source; the stock with the interest, the tree with its fruits.

Ordinarily, the new life will have for its shelter the monastery. And the monastery is a "house of God" because God governs it, God is served in it. He dwells in it, He is the possessor of its souls and of its goods; and the monastery is a "workshop," in which are found the best "instruments of good works."[1]

The special habit which he wears is a sign of consecration, of separation, of sanctification, the robe of the mystic bride, the white garment of the newly-baptised, a symbolic fashion of "putting on Christ," as St. Paul said of the baptised, by putting on a habit blessed in His name, and it is therewith a guarantee against forgetfulness, a preservative against

[1] Rule of St. Benedict, chap. iv.

many dangers, a source of respect in relation to others, for common edification.

Community life, which is the ordinary rule, symbolises Christian unity; it reveals in the heaven of the Church, that vast coherence of stars, still closer combinations, *Pleiades;* it invites to a life with our neighbour as with the Eucharist, in communion, with the Lord for its centre; it will be a *spur to charity and good works* (Heb. x. 24). Those who have gone out of the world, if the world comes to them under the forms of guests, of travellers, of the poor, will give them the welcome that they would give to Christ, because in Christ the charity that is symbolised by mutual life is universal.

The monks exercise themselves in mutual humility, in humility before God, by means of numerous practices which are misunderstood by the world; but is it not a principle for the monk to receive the world's scorn, even as he himself scorns the world?

Their eyes do not wander about over all things; they keep them for inward contemplation, for the far-off, interior Beauty. They do not speak indiscreetly; when they do speak, it is still in the spirit of silence, and their silence, full of mystery, is like that silence which is one of God's virtues.

Their silence is respectful and wise; it is a stillness which waits on a work from on high, an influx of light into the darkness within. Thanks to silence, their speech, once begun, is kept within bounds and is confined to its proper matter. The soul has concentrated its forces, watching over the organisation of thought instead of its dispersion, cultivating calmness in place of agitation, free instead of catching on to every trifle, deadening the interior uproar of passion, receiving words of inspiration and free to comment on them, emptying itself of nothingness to make room for the all.

Monks mortify themselves, that is, they cause to die in them that which has no right to live, or rather that which might rightfully live, but which they sacrifice wisely in pursuit of noble ends. And is not the rising of the spirit from the bottom whence the diver leaps upwards a noble thing; and the love of expiatory suffering something nobler still, the suffering of love summoned and tamed, which teaches you to taste the chalice of Jesus after He had poured out His blood?

For the many sufferings tainted with evil, in themselves or in others, as for many a depraved pleasure, they are eager to substitute the suffering that purifies, merits and saves.

Filling up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ, these men, crucified of their own free will, let their tears and blood flow into the stream of redemption. They inspired in Ozanam the feeling of their efficacy and power to cancel the

past when he wrote, after a night-office at the Grande Chartreuse: "I thought of all the sins which were being committed at that hour in our great cities, and I asked myself if there could be truly sufficient expiation in these things to wash out so many stains."

For all that, they are neither sombre nor depressed. The happiness of the monastery is proverbial. These men, who have driven away the gross laugh, the bitter laugh, the laugh which seeks to deafen sadness, the concealed laugh which escapes restraint and takes the risk of stirring up all the mire that is in us, find all the easier the divine smile or the frank laugh which cheers us.

It is they, the monks, who afford the world its best supply of joy. But it is a pure joy; a joy which is the fruit of charity; the inward kiss which expands and perfumes; the joy of belonging to God in union with all that loves God and of expanding the heart to His stature; the joy of anticipating heaven, though it be in the midst of tribulations.

For tribulations too are a source of joy, just as all joys bring tears in their track. The present life is such a blend of possessions and regrets, of hope and of painful expectation, that it is a continual hurly-burly of sentiments in which the soul's deepest feelings are no longer recognisable. Tears are a nourishing bread, and the bread, when it is eaten, leaves a taste of ashes in the mouth. Life and death, fatherland and exile are mingled here, and God, who is our life, who is our fatherland, God, the "portion" of the monk, God, I say, because He gives and withdraws Himself, because He reveals and hides Himself, becomes to the monk his ordeal and his pure joy at the same time. That God, we mean, who is with him, crucifying him as it were in coquetry, enrapturing and smiting him, granting to him, as He does to His Son, the privilege of sorrow. Happy is he when he keeps quiet on his cross!

When the monk works with his hands, it is because work purifies and calms; because work is the enemy of Satan; because it brings us nearer to the workmen, our brothers, and puts us into touch with Nature, our sister; because it relates us to all reality, God's child, and to ourselves in our better sources; because prayerful and patient work is happiness at hand, and to work in accordance with order is to live in God.

It is the property of work to allow the mind to be strengthened by contact with earthly realities. It makes us obey a law and do our share in the work of mankind. The earth is holy, and all real things are holy; by means of labour they are raised up from their provisional fall and helped to rise to their origins, which lie close to their ends.

St. Benedict wants the cellarer of the monastery to consider and care for the monks' tools as much as for all that he had to look after, "as much as for the sacred vessels of the altar."[1] St. Basil had said earlier "as the vessels of God," and had added "To despise them is sacrilege." Sacrilege indeed is whatever harms consecrated goods and fetters labour, that divine service!

From the work which impresses dead matter with ideas, the monk passes uninterruptedly to that non-servile work which is concerned with ideas in themselves. Study is the most assiduous companion of monastic leisure. It is called contemplation, because it is directed towards the source from which issues all Truth and remains ceaselessly dependent upon it: because its intent is to do "the work of the Word," as St. Catherine of Siena put it.

The Word expresses God, and the Father communicates to us this everflowing Word by study as He does by prayer. When the monk drinks of it, he takes from it that which will make him a Word by participation, a revealer animated by an ardent inspiration, thanks to the Spirit of love which enspheres the relations of the Father and the Son.

What mighty words have arisen from this interior intercourse extending the official and fundamental words of the Scriptures, of the Fathers, and of the teaching Church!

Liturgical worship takes a place in the monk's life which has often been criticised, which must not be exaggerated, but which is in any case a very large one.

There are some who make this worship an end, and the principal matter of an activity which is entirely devoted to adoration. What others give to study, to the apostolate, or to bodily charity, these find it well to offer to the service of the altar. They are beings of praise. They make all centre in the chant, the psalmody, ceremonies, the varied rites by which our interior religion is signified. They apply themselves to the divine "pensum" and to its sublime childlikeness; they call that their "work of God," *opus Dei,* and they consecrate to it the moments that the "positives" would like to see reserved for "serious" ends. They squander their time before God.

And it is to these particularly that the Church confides her liturgy, for since they belong entirely to God, they are the best instruments of prayer. They make of it a more continuous and more perfect praise. The liturgy, which endeavours to gather all things into itself in order to offer them to heaven, to unite all things to the Alpha and Omega that it invokes, finds a fit intermediary in the monk; like a piece of iron, already itself magnetised, which attracts others to it.

[1] Rule, chap. xxxi.

To him is granted the mission of giving a richer voice to our material and moral universe, of learning from the heavens, which *tell the glory of God,* the meaning of their song; of acting as the representative of mankind, forgetful, distracted, obsessed or refractory; of bending the knee by proxy and of satisfying for all before the divine desires, *for the Father seeketh them that will adore Him in spirit and in truth* (John iv. 23).

On condition that their life itself be a liturgy—*pulchra cæremonia,* as the Dominican constitutions say—the monks will thus anticipate the holy occupations of eternity; for the *words of eternal life* will be on their lips and will be reflected in their works. Thus they will have made all their being accord, *like the decachord,* which harmonises acts, thoughts, and voices. They will praise God by means of the acts of God in themselves and the word of God in the Scriptures.

It is they who, by the Church's commission, compose for the Eucharist that accompaniment which is most honourable and most profitable for us. They surround it with the glorious cortège of the Hours. By means of the liturgical cycle whose course has this very mystery for its centre, with the Hours revolving about the Mass, the week about the Sunday, the year about Easter, they prepare hearts for the coming of grace and ensure the diffusion of the sacramental idea.

They desire to sanctify the night as they do the day. Continuity is one of the qualities which prayer claims with the most insistent spontaneity. Is it not *meet and just, right and healthful* to give thanks to God *at all times?* Night is only the other side of day; it is fitting that God should be praised all over the earth.

Thus, too, do the monks mean to purify the night which is defiled by so many others, to take from it its taint of sin, to trust to it the seeds of good thoughts as to the dark soil, to set it in a Christian sense towards the coming day, to make a light of joy of its darkness : *Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.*

By breaking the nightly sleep and the sounder sleep of forgetfulness, they hope to turn aside that sleep of death, sin, the prelude to the everlasting death which lies in wait for us. *Walk while you have the light* of life, *lest the darkness* of death *overtake you* (John xii. 35).

It will be observed that liturgical feeling easily lifts monks to poetry, and urges them to the closest communion with nature. They love this " sister " earth of theirs, which is so eminently religious. Religious in its beginning, which is creation; religious in its progress, which is providence, and in its end, the service of the elect, nature is sacred as is all

reality, when liberty does not misdirect it. *God saw that all was good,* says the Scripture; and the goodness of beings flowing back to its origin, the stream which sings of its source as it flows, is religion. From hence the monk takes his lessons, as we have seen that he gives them thence. He wishes to be with God as nature is with God; obedient, full of harmony and praise, a word of action, a self-uttered poem, a liturgy of the twofold infinities of greatness. He is at the same time its pupil and its priest, hearing therein his Lord's voice and lending to it his own.[1]

But if the monks have as their end anything other than worship, such as charity or the apostolate, worship will none the less, though in this case as a means—and we may add as a partial end with which none can dispense—be a treasure of the highest rank. Sources cannot be neglected. And who is there that does not realise that in worship is the source of self-sacrifice and conquering activity, in that mystical communion of the alone with the Alone nourished by a public and active profession of love?

It must be understood that solemn worship is charity and a very precious act of apostolate in itself. It is the fact that the whole of Christian antiquity was nourished on it, and that this "music," this harmony of act and voice was a kind of Orphean lyre, especially for the barbarian world. A civilised world can only carry to a higher pitch the acts of the harmony of prayer.

Calm, edification, a feeling of mystery, instruction by speech and symbolism, enthusiasm in rhythm and gesture, and a close invitation to mutual unity, when, in the name of the Universal Church and before God who affords us His real Presence, we proclaim publicly and in common the changeless truth and the highest good; these are the results we hope to reap from the loving drama of the liturgy.

Again, the apostle or the being whose life is in charity, the beneficent angel whom God sends us to heal the wounds of body or soul, is a human angel. To succeed, and even to persevere, he has need of divine strength. Whence will he draw it, if not from the altar, or from the kindred ritual action over which falls the shadow of the Eucharist?

In the case of preaching religious, particularly, the apostolate is evidently based on contemplation and observance. *Contemplata aliis tradere,* to hand on the fruits of one's contemplation, is the device of one great Order, and the others agree with it.[2]

[1] The old-time liturgists, often monks, or with the feelings of monks, are the most poetical of all. *Cf.* Cabrol, *Liturgical Prayer.*

[2] This formula is from St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, $2^a\ 2^{ae}$, q. 138), and it has been adopted by the religious family of which he was a member.

The reason for this is that action is one thing with the interior life; expansion begins with concentration. Those who think that it would be better to devote to exterior action the time and spiritual energy which is bestowed on contemplation or religious observances reason like a man who would employ the time necessary for filling a reservoir in emptying it. It is merely a question of degree. An apostolic order is not conducted as if it were exclusively contemplative. But by wishing to solve the question in favour of outward action exclusively, we make way for anæmia of soul, waste, useless disturbance, and the dangers which they run who do not retain their connection with their sources of refreshment.

Choir office, with its rigorous orderliness, its rhythm and relative slowness, seems a very useful remedy for our modern anxiety and nervousness. An epoch which suffers more than any has done from nerves and overwork ought to appreciate this purifying peace, and trust to the results of an activity hardly at all narrower in scope, but otherwise more intense, going closer to the roots of things, and riper.

Does not Nature work in infinite silence? Is it not from the warm darkness of the crypt that mighty monuments soar upward into daylight? Solitude is an exile which makes return to one's fatherland more keenly felt and more bountiful.

It is not the monks who are in reality the lazy folk, although that insult is flung at them; but rather the restless. Expressionless souls, making their little successive daily tasks ends in themselves, without patience, without sense of relativity of values, ignorant of the fact that unhurried peace is itself a strength, the non-contemplatives are shut out from far-reaching activity as they are from high-soaring thought. The seaman, the peasant and the monk know that the best work is done by avoiding all hurry.

Can we fail, moreover, to realise that solemn worship, since it has the value of prayer, transfers its effects to all the undertakings with which it is connected by the spirit of faith? God does not keep for Himself what we give Him; He pours it back at once on us who thus become better tools for His work, and on those whom our zeal offers Him as a conquest that we hope as brothers to make. We must not forget that if we plant and water, it is God who gives the increase.

That is why the greatest monastic apostles have invariably been most zealous in the divine service and most attached to all the duties of conventual life. From St. Bernard or St. Francis and St. Dominic to Lacordaire, that modern among the moderns, they have all dwelt upon the application of the proverb : *Physician, heal thyself.* They have sanctified themselves in order to sanctify others; they have consecrated to God their own personal worship before offering Him even-

tually the worship of others. The apostolate is an addition, and as it were an overflowing, of their rich offering. The liturgy praises St. Dominic because he caused the *canonical man* in him to grow into an *apostolic man* (*Virum canonicum auget in apostolicum*); it does not praise him on the ground that he had abandoned God for man.

We may consider, then, that the liturgical revival inaugurated by Dom Guéranger and continuing among us is in natural relation with the apostolic viewpoints of the greatest souls. It was a very opportune campaign. Far from weakening the soul with regard to preaching and teaching, the liturgy prepares it for these duties; far from deserting the people, it gathers them up and inclines them, through visible unity, to mystical unity in the Lord.

The religious usefulness of monks is already implied in what they are, if it be true that they achieve in themselves the Church's proper work, and it is evident moreover from their work, even though it be in extra-religious domains, as when they become husbandmen, manufacturers or administrators, or devoted to studies secular in themselves. All these forms of work pour their values into the Church's treasury, in the first place by sanctifying their authors, holding them to the holy laws of their institutions and the general law of effort that is imposed on mankind; in the second, because the recognition of the people, most sensible of that which makes itself outwardly manifest, benefits religious feeling represented by the benefactor.

It is unnecessary to recall all that the monks have done for civilisation. Although some people find it convenient to forget it, none dare to despise it. Their labour has produced more result than any temporal institution, and has done so more profitably, because it was closer to its source.

As an expansive force in the Church, as a valuable institution for internal growth and progress, the monastic order offers services which, humanly speaking, can be supplied by no other body. The monks instruct the Church, just as they edify it. They keep it in touch with the sources of its doctrine, which they make their constant study. They principally, though not solely, are the undertakers of great works, such as require solitude, collaboration and ample time. The "broken cisterns" of premature information and petty publicity are not their affair. Usually they have deep insight and shape work on a broad scale.

The ministry of the word, so essential to the Church, has been committed to their care to an ever-increasing extent. We might say that it is they in particular who have obeyed the command: *Go and teach all nations,* although they have done this alongside of the bishops, whose proper office preach-

ing is, as we have said. Eager to seize for themselves the divine light, they have been no less concerned for its diffusion; they say with the Psalmist, *I have not hid Thy justice within my heart; I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation* (Ps. xxxix. 11).

The love of souls is not peculiar to them; but they urge their effort further and cover more ground therewith because they are not confined within the bounds of a diocese or even a parish. Since the thirteenth century particularly, after the foundation of the great apostolic orders, so called because they were sent by the Holy See and have traversed the world, their zeal has extended throughout the whole of the Lord's field in which their seed is cast. We have seen the image of the first ages reborn in them with renewed vigour; they have emulated the travels of Paul, the great inroads which had to precede those regular establishments to which the main work of the Church aspires.

The decisive work in the spiritual sphere is done by the hierarchy, and consequently within the limits where the hierarchy operates. The monk-apostle does not find his task there. Like Paul, he "does not baptise," he preaches. But in order that baptism may follow, he does the work of a beater-up of souls; and he supplies also the help necessary for internal missions, for those new stimulants, insistent and periodical, for which a single diocese or parish is far from being able to supply all the means. These renewals of life, following on the preparations for it, are the twofold task of a central body which is essential to the Church.

We would readily impart to you not the Gospel only, but also our own soul, wrote Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 8). Might not these words be used to evoke, nay, to express the apostolic action of the religious Orders? "To impart one's soul" is to give one's life; every apostle must be ready at need to do this; but is it not also to offer it as a model, at least to deserve that it may be considered so; like the light on the candlestick and the city set on a hill in the Saviour's parables?

The monks evangelise life by living it. They go beyond what they ask of the multitudes; but it is thereby that they are able to draw the multitudes after them, to become standard-bearers of moral victories. Themselves faithful to God in an exceptional degree, they dissuade others from betraying Him; and is not the fact that they increase His rights over themselves a pressing invitation to the keeping of His precepts?

The monks start on their pilgrimage to God more hastily, with less luggage, their loins better girt, their soul's garment not dragging behind them, lantern in hand, for the dark

parts of the road, filled with noble concern to reach Him who calls us. While they outstrip us on the path, they set landmarks in it, so that none may forget or go astray. Their shadows on the crests of the soaring mountains are cast in profile against the sky.

To walk before God, that is, in the presence of God and under His direction, is in the Scriptures the supreme praise accorded to the just. And do not the existence of monastic lives and the brightness that issues from them help us to perceive the divine presence, to overcome the terrible unawareness which holds us in its clutches, to become conscious of God, so that His will may be clear to us, as well as those desires of our own, whereof He is the rule and the inspiration, and in short to walk in that gaze whose dazzling beauty will grant us on high freedom from sin for ever?

In our trials, their voluntary trials are an encouragement and an indication of how we may use our own. They teach us to *endure the Lord,* these souls who provoke Him (Ps. xxvi. 14). They tame suffering for us. They sanctify separations in our eyes. By their detachment they undergo a repeated death, and show us that, thanks to love, it is enviable and welcoming. That which comes "but once" comes from a fatherly ruler; they display it to us, and perhaps, because they have made us accustomed to it, we shall have less fear when we come to behold its face in the darkness.

For the advantage of souls desirous of the greatest things, the monks have gained experience of the inner life on the grand scale. They are uncontested masters of it, by the side of the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, several of whom have belonged to their order. Their solitude has heard more attentively the voice of God which is *a whistling of a gentle air* (3 Kings xix. 12); it has hearkened to the silence heard of none.

Thanks to them, God is not discouraged from speaking to us, the interior Word is outpoured. Their forsaking of the world makes the *chosen* of the world turn to higher peaks to behold them. The world, thus defied and divided, is often angered at the choice that this enticement provokes; but the monks know well that they are doing it service by exasperating it thus. And if after that they are the first to be persecuted, that is their reward.

For those who hear their silent appeal they have already prepared a place. A nest warm and well built for the soul will receive them, among the branches of the hierarchy, on the trunk of the Church. For those who do not come and who insult their Master, they have also made ready in advance a loving compensation; in their brotherly and filial sadness they will find it sweet to hear the words: *You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations* (Luke xxii. 28).

Instead of our joyless religious ways, our echoless faith, our gloomy hope, our inactive charity, the holy monks give to the Church for their part an active and mystical effort of health which perfects its value; they are the jewel of the hierarchical crown, though the hierarchy remains and must always remain the deathless diadem.

There is nothing surprising, then, in the fact that the monastic Order has at all times repaired the Church's waverings, saved compromising situations by its intervention, and found in its own bosom, by making fresh starts with energy, the means of remedying its own waverings.

In all this there is a striking history, which has continued from the Church's beginnings to our own day.

The weight of the matter wherewith it is burdened, and its own very success, expose the Church to the danger of falling into the sloughs of this world, rich in life, but capable of soon submerging her. Her moral building may fall, deprived of its essential bases, humility, detachment, separation from the things of sense. And so collective saviours become necessary, coming usually under the leadership of generals of outstanding sanctity, like Francis and Dominic in the dream of Innocent III., to uphold the building human and divine.

In the canonical order alone the Church might not find sufficient reaction. It happens that "the shepherds sleep," as an illustrious monk boldly said at the Council of Trent. "It is necessary then that the dogs should bay." They bay, nay, more, they bite, as the shepherd's dog bites; they arouse, if we may venture so to say, the Holy Spirit asleep in souls, even though it be in the souls of the Church's chiefs, and they make the evangelic flock quicken its lagging steps.

Does it not indeed belong to the apostolate to maintain, and at need to restore, what in the first days the apostolate established? The Holy Spirit, as we have said again and again, is not entirely in the hierarchy. In Him are the graces of government and control; from elsewhere, often, come the graces of initiative and renewal, even of authority itself so far as it is human. The Spirit of God is Himself an apostle too. Through His elect he traverses the world, like the clouds to which the ministers of the Word are compared in the liturgy, like the purifying, seed-bearing winds.

Thanks to this effusion which is perpetually being renewed in the eternal work, the Church's evils are an opportunity for her to demonstrate her inexhaustible vitality; her maladies are crises from which she sets out once more for new laps of her race; her remedies are her elixirs of life.

In the future as in the past, then, the monks' work must be done. There is no more adaptable means than they afford of seeing the Gospel fit new situations and solve the crises in

the future which we are led to expect by all that is human and divine.

From the point of view of usefulness, as on higher ground from the organic point of view, we must affirm the indissoluble union of the canonical order and its auxiliary in the Church. Both share the duties and extend the possibilities of the Christian spiritual society; both manifest the essence of its being, human and divine.

CONCLUSION

SUCH, then, is our Church, such her necessity, such her intimate being, such her characters, her attitudes and her organisation.

The whole is coherent as God is coherent, for His life in the Trinity is reflected in the Holy Church; all is coherent as manhood is eternally coherent, for through man God has willed to bind all that is passing to His own Eternity.

This wondrous life is here under our eyes, with its weaknesses and imperfections, the offspring of its existence in time, with its energies and untold beauties, visible or unseen. Study it, as we would fain have done with more thoroughness; bring to it, if you can, more penetration and more religious affection to the Truth which saves us; turn over again and again this permanent problem which is offered to the world with its elements of clarity and mystery. If the due conditions be furnished, and the inveterate delusion of mankind does not overpower you, you will approve in the end the proud declaration of the Council of Trent, which calls the Church "a standard raised above the nations," in order that by it be made manifest the presence of God.

The Church must not be studied with the superficial glance of a passer-by; still less with the prejudiced gaze that sees nothing but faults everywhere in what it fears to see claiming its allegiance; but with a regard as wide as the horizon of humanity that must be embraced, as the infinite perspectives that must be encountered, and moreover with a determination to adhere eventually to all that is found to be true, beneficial and binding.

The truth is mighty enough to give itself to none but him who has beforehand consecrated his heart to it. May he who approaches the truths which have been stated here give himself, as he approves them, to that Truth which enfolds us all, and desires one day to be displayed in us all.

Holy Eucharist.

I Promise (John 6,48-) "I am the bread of life."

(John 6,-49) "your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead."

(50) "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it he may not die."

(51) "I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

(52) If any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever; and the Bread which I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.

(53) The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat."

(54) Then Jesus said to them: "amen, amen I say unto; except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you.

(55) He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh My Blood have everlasting life and I shall raise him up on the last day."

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